PRAYER IN THE QUR'AN

If My servants ask you about Me, I am near.
I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me.
They should therefore respond to Me and believe
in Me so that hopefully they will be rightly guided.
(Surat al-Baqara: 186)

HARUN YAHYA

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Abbreviations used:
(saas - sall-Allahu 'alyahi wa sallam): May Allah bless him and grant him peace (following a reference to the Prophet Muhammad)
(as - 'alayhi's-salam): Peace be upon him (following a reference to the prophets or angels)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Now writing under the pen-name of HARUN YAHYA, he was born in Ankara in 1956. Having completed his primary and secondary education in Ankara, he studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, he has published many books on political, scientific, and faith-related issues. Harun Yahya is well-known as the author of important works disclosing the imposture of evolutionists, their invalid claims, and the dark liaisons between Darwinism and such bloody ideologies as fascism and communism.

His pen-name is a composite of the names Harun (Aaron) and Yahya (John), in memory of the two esteemed Prophets who fought against their people's lack of faith. The Prophet's seal on the his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to the their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the final scripture) and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), last of the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet), the author makes it his purpose to disprove each fundamental tenet of godless ideologies and to have the "last word," so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. He uses the seal of the final Prophet, who attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, as a sign of his intention to offer the last word.

All of Harun Yahya's works share one single goal: to convey the Qur' an's message, encourage readers to consider basic faith-related issues such as Allah's Existence and Unity and the hereafter; and to expose godless systems' feeble foundations and perverted ideologies.

Harun Yahya enjoys a wide readership in many countries, from India to America, England to Indonesia, Poland to Bosnia, and Spain to Brazil. Some of his books are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Urdu, Arabic, Albanian, Russian, Serbo-Croat (Bosnian), Polish, Malay, Uygur Turkish, and Indonesian.

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering faith in Allah and gaining deeper insights into their faith. His books' wisdom and sincerity, together with a distinct style that's easy to understand, directly affect anyone who reads them. Those who seriously consider these books, can no longer advocate atheism or any other perverted ideology or materialistic philosophy, since these books are characterized by rapid effectiveness, definite results, and irrefutability. Even if they continue to do so, it will be only a sentimental insistence, since these books refute such ideologies from their very foundations. All contemporary movements of denial are now ideologically defeated, thanks to the books written by Harun Yahya.

This is no doubt a result of the Qur'an's wisdom and lucidity. The author modestly intends to serve as a means in humanity's search for Allah's right path. No material gain is sought in the publication of these works.

Those who encourage others to read these books, to open their minds and hearts and guide them to become more devoted servants of Allah, render an invaluable service.

Meanwhile, it would only be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books that create confusion in people's minds, lead them into ideological chaos, and that clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in people's hearts, as also verified from previous experience. It is impossible for books devised to emphasize the author's literary power rather than the noble goal of saving people from loss of faith, to have such a great effect. Those who doubt this can readily see that the sole aim of Harun Yahya's books is to overcome

disbelief and to disseminate the Qur'an's moral values. The success and impact of this service are manifested in the readers' conviction.

One point should be kept in mind: The main reason for the continuing cruelty, conflict, and other ordeals endured by the vast majority of people is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. This can be ended only with the ideological defeat of disbelief and by conveying the wonders of creation and Qur'anic morality so that people can live by it. Considering the state of the world today, leading into a downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, clearly this service must be provided speedily and effectively, or it may be too late.

In this effort, the books of Harun Yahya assume a leading role. By the will of Allah, these books will be a means through which people in the twentyfirst century will attain the peace, justice, and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

TO THE READER

A special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution because this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation—and therefore, Allah's Existence—over the last 140 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt. It is therefore an imperative service, a very important duty to show everyone that this theory is a deception. Since some readers may find the chance to read only one of our book, we think it appropriate to devote a chapter to summarize this subject.

All the author's books explain faith-related issues in light of Qur'anic verses, and invite readers to learn Allah's words and to live by them. All the subjects concerning Allah's verses are explained so as to leave no doubt or room for questions in the reader's mind. The books' sincere, plain, and fluent style ensure that everyone of every age and from every social group can easily understand them. Thanks to their effective, lucid narrative, they can be read at a one sitting. Even those who rigorously reject spirituality are influenced by the facts these books document and cannot refute the truthfulness of their contents.

This and all the other books by the author can be read individually, or discussed in a group. Readers eager to profit from the books will find discussion very useful, letting them relate their reflections and experiences to one another.

In addition, it will be a great service to Islam to contribute to the publication and reading of these books, written solely for the pleasure of Allah. The author's books are all extremely convincing. For this reason, to communicate true religion to others, one of the most effective methods is encouraging them to read these books.

We hope the reader will look through the reviews of his other books at the back of this book. His rich source material on faith-related issues is very useful, and a pleasure to read.

In these books, unlike some other books, you will not find the author's personal views, explanations based on dubious sources, styles that are unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, nor hopeless, pessimistic arguments that create doubts in the mind and deviations in the heart.

FOREWORD

A re you close enough to Allah, the One Who created you and placed you in this world, endowing you with wisdom and a body? When was the last time you prayed to Him? Do you plead to Allah only when you are in trouble, or do you always keep your mind occupied with His remembrance?

Are you aware that Allah is very close to you, that He knows everything you think about or whisper? Do you think of Him as your Lord, just as He is the Lord of all people? Or that He is your most intimate friend and provider and that you should ask for anything from Him?

Whatever your answer to these questions , you will benefit from reading this book, for it seeks to explain how close Allah is to His servants and the kind of prayer He asks from them. Allah stresses the importance of prayer with the verse, **"... Say: 'What has My Lord to do with you if you do not call on Him?'" (Surat al-Furqan: 77).** Our Prophet (saas) also reminded Muslims of prayer with the words *"There is nothing more dear to Allah than a servant praying to Him." (Tirmidhi)* There are no limits to praying to Allah and drawing close to Him, which explains why understanding prayer and being dedicated to it benefits everyone.

Prayer is the bond between Allah and people. Humankind inherently possesses the need to establish a bond with Allah: this is their very nature. Praying is an essential and natural part of a believer's life, though the majority of people only think of praying during times of insurmountable distress. Allah prefers that we pray to Him during times of ease as well as in times of severe hardship. For this reason, the Qur'an gives a detailed account of how to pray to Allah sincerely.

In the Qur'an, 209 verses refer to praying directly or indirectly, which indicates how important prayer is. As one reads these verses, he or she can better understand the essential nature of this form of worship.

Prayer Described in the Qur'an

Prayer means "calling on, addressing, making a fervent request, asking for help." In the Qur'an, prayer is also described as "turning to Allah with all one's soul" or the "acknowledgement of one's weaknesses and limited power before Allah's infinite might, and asking for help from Him."

Anyone who has faith in Allah prays to Him in one way or another. However, the majority of people turn to prayer as a last resort, after having exhausted all possible alternatives during times of trouble or stress. Once the hardship is over, they forget about remembering Allah and imploring Him, until the next time they experience trouble.

There are other people who misunderstand prayer completely. For them, prayer is some incomprehensible ritual taught by the family's elderly members. They do not think about Allah's existence, greatness and might while praying. They scarcely remember that Allah always sees and hears people, and that He answers prayers. They repeat memorized words without giving any thought to them. However, the form of prayer that Allah describes in the Qur'an, which is the subject of this book, is quite different.

According to the Qur'an, praying is the simplest way to reach Allah. Now let's remind ourselves of some of the attributes of Allah. He is the One Who is closer to people than their jugular vein, the One Who knows and

hears everything… Not even a single inner thought of human beings remains hidden to Allah. This being the case, only thinking suffices to ask for something from Him. This shows how easy it is to get in contact with Allah.

Allah is pleased as long as people retain the consciousness of being Allah's servant. For this reason, turning to Allah, confessing one's mistakes to Him and asking for help only from Him are essentials of being Allah's servant. A contrary attitude means growing arrogant towards Allah, which, according to the Qur'an, leads to an eternal torment in Hell.

In our day, as is the case with some other forms of worship, prayer is perceived by many as an obsolete tradition. This notion has been reinforced by the idea that the world is self-contained and independent of Allah. Some people assume that they, or the people around them, have control over the events they encounter throughout their lives, so they do not feel the need to pray to Allah until they encounter a disaster or come close to death. This is a delusion, which in some cases drags people to the point of perceiving prayer as a kind of sorcery that has survived to our day. The fact is that prayer is a form of worship that permeates every aspect of one's life.

All people, without exception, are in need of prayer. It is only flawed thinking to assume that a poor person trying to survive under harsh living conditions needs prayer more than a well-off person. It is erroneous to think that someone who has attained everything he or she desired does not need prayer, for such a conviction limits the meaning of prayer to satisfaction of worldly desires. Believers pray both for their life in this world and the next. Prayer is accompanied by putting one's trust in Allah, for which reason a person who prays acquires the consciousness that the Creator and Judge of the universe is in charge of the events they encounter, whether minor or significant. Awareness that all the methods to cope with or prevent a problem rests with Allah, the All-Mighty, and thus putting one's trust in Him and praying to Him alone, instills a sense of relief and security in a believer.

PRAYER IN THE QUR'ANIC SENSE

D o you recall when was the last time you prayed?... Readers' answers may vary, but what is common to all is that most people pray, at one time or another. Indeed, people can pray to Allah, our Lord, at any time and in any place they like, for anything they wish. Allah calls attention to the fact that people can pray and remember Him anywhere they wish:

Those who remember Allah, standing, sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying]: "Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Glory be to You! So safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire. Our Lord, those You cast into the Fire, You have indeed disgraced. The wrongdoers will have no helpers. Our Lord, we heard a caller calling us to faith: "Have faith in your Lord!' and we had faith. Our Lord, forgive us our wrong actions, erase our bad actions from us and take us back to You with those who are truly good. Our Lord, give us what You promised us through Your Messengers, and do not disgrace us on the Day of Rising. You do not break Your promise." Their Lord responds to them: "I will not let the deeds of any doer among you go to waste, male or female…" (Surah Al Imran: 191-195)

In the Qur'an, Allah describes the kind of prayer He most likes, which we will explain below.

Praying Humbly, Without Loudness of Voice

When you are in distress or feel desperate and thus feel the need to pray to Allah, where would you like to pray? Surely, the solitude of one's own room at night or a very tranquil place that will give you the sense of Allah's nearness would be the place you are looking for.

While worshipping, spiritual integrity can best be attained in a time and place that offers secure undivided attention. A person who feels the need to pray to Allah for the correction of his or her mistakes prefers to be alone and pray in secret. The Prophet Zakariyya's prayers, through which he asked for a descendant, is an example of secret prayer:

When he called on his Lord in secret and said, "My Lord, my bones have lost their strength and my head is crowned with white, but in calling on You, My Lord, I have never been disappointed." (Surah Maryam: 3-4)

As stated above, prayer is "accepting one's weaknesses and limited power before Allah's infinite might and asking for help from Him." For this reason, prayer demands absolute consciousness and acceptance of one's weaknesses and destitution before Allah. In this sense, there is no doubt that one will fail to attain such consciousness if one is insincere. In the Qur'an, Allah recommends believers to pray humbly and secretly:

Call on your Lord humbly and secretly. He does not love those who overstep the limits. (Surat al- A'raf: 55)

Remember your Lord in yourself humbly and with awe, without loudness of voice, morning and evening. Do not be one of the unaware. Those who are in the presence of your Lord do not consider themselves too great to worship Him. They glorify His praise and they prostrate to Him... (Surat al-A'raf: 205-206)

In the Qur'an, Allah calls our attention to solitary prayer that is performed with a deep feeling of dire need. In this sense, the place, the sophistication of the outward performance, the number of participants, or the supplicants' loud voice can by no means be the criteria for a successful prayer.

One must be aware that a loud voice in prayer is not an element that makes it heard by Allah. As already mentioned, Allah, the All-Knowing, knows even our inner thoughts and He is closer to us than our jugular vein. In this sense, it is needless to raise our voice so as to be heard by our Lord Who is close to us. One can either pray secretly or in a tone of voice audible only to oneself.

From the verses below we understand that both while praying or going about our daily business, a person needs to use his or her voice at a moderate level:

Be moderate in your tread and lower your voice. The most hateful of voices is the donkey's bray. (Surah Luqman: 19)

Say: "Call on Allah or call on the All-Merciful, whichever you call upon, the Most Beautiful Names are His." Do not be too loud in your prayer or too quiet in it, but try to find a way between the two. (Surat al-Isra: 110)

As the verses reveal, the form of worship described in the Qur'an is far from ostentation. It is not performed to impress people: the sole purpose is the due fulfillment of one's duty towards the Creator. The Qur'an emphasizes this point strongly. In verses related to prayer, there are strong references to "calling on Allah, making one's religion sincerely His," which means, performing one's prayer to earn Allah's good pleasure alone and not seeking any other purpose. We can see this from verses such as the following:

He is the Living—there is no god but Him—so call on Him, making your religion sincerely His. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds. (Surah Ghafir: 65)

So call upon Allah, making your religion sincerely His, even though the disbelievers detest it. (Surah Ghafir: 14)

Say: "My Lord has commanded justice. Stand and face Him in every mosque and call on Him, making your religion sincerely His. As He originated you, so you will return." (Surat al-A'raf: 29)

The religion belongs to Allah alone. All forms of worship are performed to earn Allah's good pleasure. The only way to attain this goal is to perform our worship in the form Allah describes.

Those who do not make their prayers or any other form of worship sincerely Allah's, that is, those who seek "ostentation," are in great delusion. As Allah says:

So woe to the praying ones, Who are unmindful of their prayers, Who do [good] to be seen. (Surat al-Maun: 4-6)

Feeling Allah's Existence While Praying

One of the essentials of prayer is having firm faith in Allah. In situations in which one feels desperate, people feel no doubt about Allah's existence and His help. Yet a person ought also to feel Allah's existence, might and grandeur while praying during times of ease. In fact, not only during prayer, but at every instant of daily life, a believer should retain this awareness. At every moment he must feel Allah's existence and closeness and pray, for only someone who is cognizant of Allah's existence acknowledges the meaning and importance of prayer. Prayer is an intimate and personal bond between people and Allah. Through prayer, people express all their troubles and wishes to Allah and implore Him to assist them. In return, Allah answers His servants' prayer.

As said earlier, prayer in the Qur'anic sense can by no means be limited to a few rituals. As the verse **"… remember Allah standing, sitting and lying on your sides." (Surat an-Nisa: 103)** maintains, one can bring Allah to mind and pray to Him at any time and under all conditions, without necessarily performing any particular ritual or ceremony. That is because what matters is not the outward performance but one's sincerity.

Misunderstanding this strips prayer of its actual meaning and causes it to be perceived as a form of magic or spell. We can see this by the superstitious practices of some ignorant people such as fastening clothes to trees or blowing into water. It is well to remember that superstition is the opposite of the Qur'anic rationale. Instead of directly turning to Allah and asking for their needs from Him, these ignorant people devise some superstitious rituals or symbols and pray through these means. Meanwhile, they are unaware on whom they call. They attribute supernatural power to those objects they pray to, yet they fail to describe the nature of this power. This includes the superstitious practice of visiting tombs and praying to the dead to ask for help, whereas visiting tombs should be to remind us of death and the power of Allah.

A believer who complies with Allah's command which says, **"Remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him completely." (Surat al-Muzzammil: 8)** turns to Allah alone, and submits and pleads to Him.

Striking a Balance between Hope and Fear While Praying

In the Qur'an, Allah refers to Himself as, **"... the Most Merciful of the merciful..." (Surat al-Anbiya': 83).** It is also stated that, provided that one asks for repentance, anyone who does evil will find Allah forgiving. **(Surat an-Nisa: 110)** For this reason, people must reflect upon this attribute of Allah and pray with hope. No matter how serious an error a person may have committed, and is in deep remorse over it, it is not a reason for him or her to despair of Allah's forgiveness. Thus, the state of mind caused by erring and committing a sin must never become an impediment for a prayer of hope for forgiveness, for Allah states in the Qur'an that only disbelievers lose hope in Allah's mercy:

"... Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah except for people who disbelieve." (Surah Yusuf: 87)

In addition, no one is immune to punishment in Hell. Indeed Allah warns people against this, saying, **"No one is safe from the punishment of his Lord." (Surat al-Ma'arij: 28)** For this reason, everyone must fear Allah as much as he or she can. Human beings, whose life is a test, are always vulnerable to Satan's cunning deceptions and are thus very likely to go astray and turn away from the righteous path. Nobody is guaranteed a place in Paradise. This makes a person fear failing to attain Allah's good pleasure, while hoping for Allah's mercy.

Indeed, one of the attributes of a true believer that distinguishes him from all others is his fear of Allah, since a disbeliever doubts even the existence of Hell. Believers, however, are fully cognizant of Hell's existence, and they see it as a very serious threat. Having an unswerving faith in the Day of Judgment, they feel the greatest fear. Only a person who has faith in Allah and avoids arrogance is influenced in her conduct by this fear: she feels no doubt about the existence and severity of the torment of Hell, and never assumes an attitude or behavior that may involve the risk of being thrown into it. She only aspires to the life in the hereafter that abounds with infinite beauty and makes every effort to distance herself from torment. The fear a believer feels for the hereafter manifests itself in his or her prayer.

That is why we find the concepts of fear and hope side by side in the Qur'an. If a person fails to fear the torment of Hell while praying, this is due to an essential failure of thinking and comprehension. Just as how eagerly a person prays to attain Paradise, so must he, for avoidance of Hell. In other words, through fear of Hell, he hopes to attain Paradise. Some of the verses that mention this are as follows:

Do not corrupt the earth after it has been put right. Call on Him fearfully and eagerly. Allah's mercy is close to the good-doers. (Surat al-A'raf: 56)

Their sides eschew their beds as they call on their Lord in fear and ardent hope. And they give of what We have provided for them. (Surat as-Sajda: 16)

As is seen, fear and hope are the two essential feelings that are proper to prayer as described in the Qur'an. In fact, a careful scrutiny of the Qur'an reveals the vital importance these two concepts represent for all forms of worship and in every instant of one's life.

We must remember that prayer is both an important duty towards Allah and a means that will help us attain our next lives, for in the Qur'an Allah states that the end of those who fail to offer prayers to Allah will be the eternal torment in Hell.

Your Lord says, "Call on Me and I will answer you. Those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell abject." (Surah Ghafir: 60)

Remembering the Names of Allah While Praying

It is Allah's names that introduce Him to us. Allah is *ar-Rahim*, All-Merciful. He is *al-Haqim*, the One Who holds everything under His control. He is *al-Razzaq*, the One Who provides for people… Human beings acknowledge better Allah's greatness, nearness and might, by addressing Him by these names. For instance, when asking for provision, one can address Allah by His name *al-Razzaq*. Indeed, in the Qur'an, Allah states that we can pray to Him by any of His names:

Say: "Call on Allah or call on the All-Merciful, whichever you call upon, the Most Beautiful Names are His." (Surat al-Isra: 110)

To Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names, so call on Him by them and abandon those who desecrate His Names. They will be repaid for what they did. (Surat al-A'raf: 180)

A person who is knowledgeable about Allah's attributes does not attempt to conceal his mistakes from Allah, aware that He knows everything whether he conceals them or not. Aware that hiding one's wrongdoings brings a believer nothing but harm, she repents and seeks His forgiveness for all her sins. Indeed, the Prophet Ibrahim's prayer begins as follows:

Our Lord! You know what we keep hidden and what we divulge. Nothing is hidden from Allah either on the earth or in heaven. (Surah Ibrahim: 38)

A believer knows that, no matter what his or her wish may be, everything is under Allah's control and that He needs only to command "Be" and it is. With this in mind, he feels no insurmountable barrier to attaining Allah's blessings, and overcomes any hardship and obstacle through prayer.

Aside from asking for help from Allah and expressing one's needs, prayer is a means to remember and exalt Allah. The Qur'an gives us examples of exalting Allah by uttering His names in the prophets' prayers. Some of these prayers are as follows:

He (Sulayman) said, "My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom the like of which will never be granted to anyone after me. Truly You are the Ever-Giving." (Surah Sad: 35)

"Our Lord, do not make our hearts swerve aside after You have guided us. And give us mercy from You. You are the Ever-Giving." (Surah Al Imran: 8)

He [Musa] said, "My Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy. You are the Most Merciful of the merciful." (Surat al-A'raf: 151)

Then and there Zakariyya called on his Lord and said, "O Lord, grant me by Your favor an upright child. You are the Hearer of Prayer." (Surah Al Imran: 38)

Avoiding Standard Expressions While Praying

Prayer is remembering Allah, confessing one's wrongdoings to Him and expressing one's needs. A heartfelt sincerity is essential for prayer to be meaningful in these ways.

People repeat standard expressions while praying because, rather than being a sincere act of worship, people consider prayer as a sort of ritual, habit or custom. One who grasps Allah's greatness, fears His punishment, and desires to earn His good pleasure, will turn to Him with heartfelt sincerity and honesty. Similarly, one who submits himself to Allah, and takes Him as his only friend and helper, will admit his troubles and distress to Him. As in the case of the Prophet Ya'qub (as), who said **"… I make complaint about my grief and sorrow to Allah alone…" (Surah Yusuf: 86),** he will admit his sufferings and requests to Allah, and ask for help and good from Him alone.

In a prayer that lacks such sincerity—and thus is perceived as an obligatory ritual or magic spell—the use of stock expressions are unavoidable. In such a case, the prayer is performed by uttering some standard phrases without thinking about their meaning. Prayer, however, is a person's sincere bond with Allah. Every one has their own problems, requirements, wishes and state of mind. In this sense, what matters during prayer is not the words but the state of mind.

Indeed, the prayers referred to by the Qur'an possess an unaffected style. When we look at the prophets's prayers in general, we come across frank and heartfelt expressions reflecting their genuine state of mind.

Avoiding Hastiness While Praying

Man is impetuous by nature, a fact which is also stressed in the verse, **"Man is a creature of haste. I will show you My Signs so do not impatiently urge me." (Surat al-Anbiya': 37).** When this hastiness surfaces, a person may well behave without considering the consequences of their behavior. Indeed, this hastiness usually reveals itself in the desire to attain worldly blessings.

People feel an inner desire for Paradise and Allah's blessings. One of the reasons why these blessings have their counterparts in this life is to ensure a better grasp of Paradise and thereby the desire for it. However, people, out of their hastiness and desire to attain these blessings, want their wishes to be granted immediately. This hastiness may sometimes reveal itself in prayer too. People expect an immediate answer to their prayers. When a person feels their prayer is not answered, they may wrongly conclude that it is not accepted. In time, impatience turns to hopelessness, even to the point of abandoning prayer. Our Prophet (saas) also drew attention

to this point saying, *"Your supplications will be answered as long as you are not impatient by saying, 'Ihave supplicated to my Lord but He has not answered.'" (Al-Bukhari)*

We must bear in mind that it is Allah Who knows best what is good for us. The Qur'an states this with the verse, **"… It may be that you hate something when it is good for you and it may be that you love something when it is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know." (Surat al-Baqara: 216)** This is why, when the servant asks for something from our Lord, he must be pleased with Him, whatever the outcome, aware that the decision rests with Allah alone. Not everything we wish for may be good for us. Therefore, Allah answers the prayer, not in the way we necessarily expect, but in the way deemed by Him to be most just. It may well be that, in order for a believer to grow in wisdom, Allah may not answer his prayer in the way he wishes, or until He prepares his character so he is ready for it. It may also be that Allah will replace his wish with something that is better, meanwhile, testing his patience and loyalty. Indeed, Allah recommends us to be steadfast in prayer:

Seek help in steadfastness and prayer. But that is a very hard thing, except for the humble. (Surat al-Baqara: 45)

In the Qur'an, Allah advises us to be resolute in prayer. Prayer is an act of worship and patience in prayer is important for the supplicant. A resolute prayer during times of adversity is a sign that one sorely needs an answer for that prayer, and more importantly, it draws one closer to Allah. It makes a believer grow in wisdom, will and character. A believer persevering in prayer receives an answer to his prayer in the form of a soul that is close to Allah, and this is an answer much more precious than many of the things one may ask for.

In some cases, many prophets prayed to Allah persistently for long years and their prayers were ultimately answered: the Prophet Ya'qub's (as) meeting his son (the Prophet Yusuf (as)) after years; the Prophet Yusuf's release from the prison where he was held for years and his being made the head of the Treasury and the way Allah eventually removed the severe afflictions from the Prophet Ayyub (as) who had suffered uncomplainingly, are all significant examples of patience.

Allah responded to these noble people's prayers only after some time for a specific purpose: He made them grow in wisdom; grow strong in character, patience and sincerity; and made them servants worthy of Paradise.

For this reason, being hasty in receiving an answer to one's prayer is not becoming to a believer. The sole responsibility of a Muslim is to be Allah's servant and be pleased with what has been ordained for him. In this sense, a true believer must perform his prayer as a part of this responsibility.

One Does Not Pray Only for Worldly Blessings

While praying, should we ask for mundane blessings, or turn solely to the life of the hereafter?

Allah considers both kinds of supplications good for sincere believers. No doubt, the life of this world is a short one that is doomed to end. Allah gives each blessing to human beings so that they can feel grateful to Him and draw nearer to Him. A blessing brings Paradise to mind, and makes a believer remember Allah's names and glorify Him. For these reasons, Allah recommends that believers pray both for this life and the next. Meanwhile, He warns them against turning all their attention to the temporary lure of this life. As the Qur'an says:

… There are some people who say, "Our Lord, give us good in the world." They will have no share in the hereafter. And there are others who say, "Our Lord, give us good in the world, and good in the hereafter, and safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire." They will have a good share from what they have earned. Allah is swift at reckoning. (Surat al-Baqara: 200-202)

A person asks for things that concern his own world. His pursuits and interests in life determine the way he prays. In addition, those devoted to Allah also reflect in their prayers their desire to fulfill His obligations.

One's wishes pertaining to this life may come true. Yet, as is said earlier, these may not turn out to be good for him. He asks for money, but that money may lead him astray, for in an environment where material values are idolized, almost everyone surrounding him will behave in a manner opposite to the tenets of religion.

The wish in question is a mundane one and it may well be granted in this world. But in the hereafter, what he encounters may not meet his expectations. Some of the lures of this world are related in the following verse :

To mankind the love of worldly appetites is painted in glowing colors: women and children, and heaped-up mounds of gold and silver, and horses with fine markings, and livestock and fertile farmland. All that is merely the enjoyment of the life of the world. The best homecoming is in the presence of Allah. (Surah Al Imran: 14)

Of course there is some benefit to attaining these goals in this life, but each one of these mundane benefits may ultimately turn out to be a loss in the hereafter. However, as the examples of prophets show us, when asked for with the right intention, worldly benefits can also be a gain in the hereafter.

These noble people asked for the temporary gains of this world such as material goods, children and an enviable status in society only to earn Allah's good pleasure. None of the prophets asked for children to enjoy the privilege of the continuance of their names: they only wanted children so that their children could become leaders to people of faith after them.

Meanwhile, if someone desires many children as a way to show off, to satisfy his or her ambitions or for feelings of superiority, Allah may grant this wish. But because of the ostentation and arrogance of this wish, a person will be distanced from Allah, and will have no reward in the hereafter for this desire.

So, a prayer that is oriented solely to mundane blessings is not only unbecoming to a believer, but also a form of insincerity on his behalf. A believer's main goal is Paradise. In their prayers, believers must not forget their real abode and devote all their attention to the life of the hereafter. They must ask for things for the sake of both this world and beyond.

Rather Than Being Personal, Prayers Must be For all Believers

In societies of ignorance, people crave the best of everything: they want to have the best car, the best house, lots of money, a beautiful spouse and so on. It is not uncommon to see them quarrelling jealously with their close friends or relatives.

Those who live by the Qur'an's values, however, share what they have with others. Believers understand that they do not really "own" their blessings in this world, rather that they are from Allah, so when they can, they share them with others. Indeed in the Qur'an, Allah calls our attention to this point while making mention of believers' attributes:

... [Those who] do not find in their hearts any need for what they have been given and prefer others over themselves even if they themselves are needy. It is the people who are safe-guarded from the avarice of their own selves who are successful. (Surat al-Hashr: 9)

This fondness believers feel for one another, and the significance of their striving for one another's good is mentioned in many other verses:

The men and women of the believers are friends of one another. They command what is right and forbid what is wrong, and establish prayer and pay alms, and obey Allah and His Messenger. They are the people on whom Allah will have mercy. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawba: 71)

The community of believers also manifests itself in their prayers, as is demonstrated by the fact that while addressing Allah, believers often say "we" rather than "I". That is, while asking for anything from Allah, a believer asks not only for him or herself, but also for all other believers. No doubt, one may also call on Allah for personal reasons. One may ask for Allah's help in attaining all sorts of blessings, in repentance or in avoiding the torment in Hell or being degraded on the Day of Judgment. However, asking for these things also for other believers is an attribute praised in the Qur'an. As the following verses relate :

… Our Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or make a mistake! Our Lord, do not place on us a load like the one You placed on those before us! Our Lord, do not place on us a load we have not the strength to bear! And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy on us. You are our Master, so help us against the disbelieving people. (Surat al-Baqara: 286)

Our Lord, do not make our hearts swerve aside after You have guided us. And give us mercy from You. You are the Ever-Giving. Our Lord, You are the Gatherer of mankind to a Day of which there is no doubt. Allah will not break His promise. (Surah Al Imran: 8-9)

Our Lord, we have faith in what You have sent down and have followed the Messenger, so write us down among the witnesses. (Surah Al Imran: 53)

TIME AND PLACE FOR PRAYER

O ne who prays as it is described in the Qur'an, prays with the acknowledgement of his or her status as Allah's servant. He feels profoundly his submissiveness before Allah's might and feels certain that Allah sees and hears him.

According to the Qur'an, prayer cannot be confined to any particular time and place. Because the wishes and needs of people never abate, their prayers never end. That is, prayer has no time limitations.

However the Qur'an mentions when are the best times to pray, such as the nighttime and the morning prayers, when one distances himself from daily tasks in order to concentrate on prayer. One verse stresses the importance of the dawn prayer: **"... those who seek forgiveness before dawn." (Surah Al Imran: 17)** Other verses highlight how praying at nighttime offers the best time for reflection, reading the Qur'an and prayer:

Certainly rising at night has a stronger effect and is more conducive to concentration. In the daytime much of your time is taken up by business matters. Remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him completely. (Surat al-Muzzammil: 6-8)

Although there are no time limitations for prayer, there are reasons that the Qur'an calls attention to the dawn and nighttime prayers. A believer who starts a new day with a sincere prayer, and thus establishes a close bond with Allah, is strongly reminded of the main purpose of attaining Allah's approval or observing His limits. One who starts her day with prayers conducts herself with the awareness that Allah sees her at every moment.

The nighttime prayer mentioned in the Qur'an is an opportunity for someone who has engaged in the mundane tasks of life throughout day to reconsider and reorient his or her deeds and attitudes; reflecting at the end of the day gives hindsight that enables a person consciously to see the divine wisdom in seemingly negative events that happened and that appeared random at the time .

Devoting some time to prayer at nighttime helps people reflect over the wrongdoings they committed during that day, seek repentance and forgiveness for them, and clear their head from the possible negative emotions that might be clouding their mind.

This aside, a particular place does not necessarily need to be assigned for prayer. One can pray in the shopping mall, on the street, in the car, at school, or at work, that is, anywhere. What matters is to remember that, wherever a person may be, Allah is near to them than their own jugular vein. In the Qur'an, Allah states that prophets called on Him at any time and any place. One verse reads:

So he [Musa] drew water for them and then withdrew into the shade and said, "My Lord, I am truly in need of any good You have in store for me." (Surat al-Qasas: 24)

BEING CONCERNED THAT A PRAYER WILL NOT BE ANSWERED

A s a result of the inculcations we are subjected to throughout our lives, we come to disregard the incredible miracles taking place in the flow of life. In time, many people come to believe that events on earth occur coincidentally or randomly. In actuality, most of these people do not deny Allah's existence or at least, renounce it outright. Yet they assume that the universe operates in a fashion independent of Allah, that Allah does not intervene in the course of mundane affairs, or that He intervenes once in a while through "miracles." This person, who fails to regard Allah in a manner due Him, also fails to grasp that Allah answers prayers. Even if he prays, he harbors doubts that Allah will answer.

However, a believer is certain that Allah hears her when she prays and answers her in one way or another, for she is aware that events take place not casually but in compliance with a destiny preordained by Allah. For this reason, she never feels concerned that her prayer will remain unanswered. Allah answers heartfelt prayers. As Allah states:

If My servants ask you about Me, I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me. They should therefore respond to Me and believe in Me so that hopefully they will be rightly guided. (Surat al-Baqara: 186)

Other verses read, **"... He Who responds to the oppressed when they call on Him..." (Surat an-Naml: 61).** This verse reinforces the fact that Allah answers all sincere prayers.

Consequently, one must supplicate with a firm assurance of Allah's help. The contrary, that is, having doubts about whether Allah will answer one's call, is from the outset an attitude converse to the Qur'anic rationale. Our Prophet's (saas) hadith *"one should beg one's Lord with a will and full devotion, for there is nothing in the eye of Allah which He cannot grant." (Muslim)* also points to that fact.

For this reason, the two basic attributes of a supplicant are sincerity and trust in Allah. Allah wants His servants to be near to Him; He answers those calls His servants make with a sincere heart. For Allah, Who created humankind from a single drop of water, and the universe from nothing, it is very easy to answer prayer. One needs only to turn to Allah with an unswerving faith and patience.

The greatest mistake people make about prayers is to cease praying because of the concern that the prayer won't be answered. This is, in many ways, a flawed, and even ignorant, attitude. We must first make it clear that the answer of a prayer is not necessarily the "exact answer" one expects. As stated above, one may ask for something that is detrimental. This verse makes this point clear: **"Man prays for evil just as he prays for good. Man is prone to be impetuous." (Surat al-Isra: 11)**

The reason a person may not receive an answer straight after their prayers or may receive an answer in a different form, is a test from Allah. Allah may well give those blessings at the end of a

certain period for a particular purpose, to put His servants' patience to test, for instance, or to make them attain a more perfected faith.

VERBAL PRAYER AND PRAYER IN ACTION

A s well as verbal prayer, Allah expects His servants to demonstrate how important they consider a prayer that asks for something to be, by their endeavor. This endeavor is called "prayer in action."

Prayer in action expresses one's exhausting all means to attain a desired end. In order to take the university exams, for instance, one needs to fill in the related forms, take courses and study. All these actions are prayers in action. Meanwhile, asking for success from Allah while accomplishing all these is also a prayer. The prayer in action is a basic act of worship that must be performed together with verbal prayer. Another example that clarifies verbal prayer and prayer in action is repentance. Asking for repentance and forgiveness for a sin is a verbal prayer. However, one's responsibility does not end here: one who prays to Allah to protect him from evil must also make some effort in this regard, and employ his will-power in situations where he has to choose between right and wrong. That is, he must truly repent and never return to his former ways after he has quit them. This would be his prayer in action.

Just as it is wrong for a person who only prays without involving himself in any kind of prayer in action, it is also wrong to say "I have accomplished this task," failing to pray verbally after completing the prayer in action.

PRAYERS ARE OFFERED TO ALLAH ALONE

A scribing partners to Allah, that is, idolatry (*shirk*), is the gravest crime that can be committed against Allah. Allah stresses the seriousness of this crime in the Qur'an as follows:

Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him but He forgives whoever He wills for anything other than that. Anyone who associates something with Allah has committed a terrible crime. (Surat an-Nisa: 48)

Idolatry has always been prevalent historically, and is also widespread in our time. Many people may consider it a remote possibility for them to be idolatrous, even as they immerse themselves in idolatry, for idolatry is ascribing Allah's attributes to other beings. For this reason, if a person's purpose in life is to earn the approval of beings other than Allah and please them, then they are ascribing partners to Allah.

Praying is one of the most important ways to protect oneself against idolatry, since while praying, the supplicant acknowledges Allah's existence and unity deep inside and recognizes that there is no one to turn to other than Him. For this reason, supplication protects a believer against idolatry. Supplication is also an acknowledgement of one's weaknesses before Allah and that He is the only One who can help him. For this reason, prayer protects a believer against idolatry.

As the verse **"O Prophet! Allah is enough for you, and for the believers who follow you." (Surat al-Anfal: 64)** maintains, Muslims know that the only being from whom help is sought is Allah. He is the One Who is superior in every way, the Owner of infinite power, and the One who sees and hears everything. He is Allah, Who is exalted above anything. He holds all the power in the entire universe. This being the case, help and forgiveness must be sought from no one but Allah, the One Who is Rich Beyond Need, Praiseworthy. In the Qur'an, Allah states the gravity of the error of praying to someone other than Allah:

So do not call on any other god along with Allah or you will be among those who will be punished. (Surat ash-Shuara: 213)

In other verses, Allah describes the situation of those who pray to others than Allah:

Those you call on besides Allah do not create anything. They are themselves created. They are dead, not alive, and they are not aware of when they will be raised. (Surat an-Nahl: 20-21)

Consequently, a sincere believer never prays to someone other than Allah. He implores only Him and asks for His help alone. In Surat al-Fatiha, the first surah of the Qur'an, Allah advises believers to pray in the following way:

You alone we ask for help. Guide us on the straight path, the path of those You have blessed, not of those with anger on them, nor of the misguided. (Surah al-Fatiha: 4-7)

What befits Muslims is to ponder over and grasp Allah's infinite might, submit themselves wholeheartedly to this might and ask for help only from Him. A contrary attitude brings grief both in this world and beyond. This is Allah's promise.

THE IGNORANT UNDERSTANDING OF PRAYER

T hose who take beings other than Allah to be their god, in other words, idolaters, also pray to Allah from time to time. However, idolaters' prayers are quite different from that of believers'. Idolaters remember that they are in need of Allah only in times of trouble and only pray to be saved from it.

However, at every moment of one's life, people are in need of Allah. The difference between the prayer of a believer and an idolater emerges right at this point. Believers turn to Allah under all circumstances and at all times. For them to turn to Allah in prayer, believers do not wait for hard times. Because they feel the need to draw near to Allah, they pray at every moment.

Idolaters' telling attribute is their ingratitude and hypocrisy towards Allah. In times of trouble and distress, they turn purely to Allah and pray. When the distress is removed, they totally forget Allah, as if it were not they who had called on Him. This is because they assume that some beings other than Allah hold control over the occurrence of events. They are not aware that everything on earth happens by Allah's Will. Due to this shallow outlook, they forget that whatever they hope for is already under Allah's control. When they get sick, for instance, they think it is the doctors, medicine or the advanced technology employed by the hospital that will cure them. They fail to think that it is Allah Who heals every disease, and Who creates the medicine and the doctors. When the doctors and medicine on which they rely so much fail, only then do they think about taking refuge in Allah, something they had never thought of before. The fact is, it is Allah alone Who heals a person. The people of ignorance, however, can never grasp this fact. They show ungratefulness. One verse explains this ingratitude as follows:

When harm touches man, he calls on Us, lying on his side or sitting down or standing up. Then when We remove the harm from him he carries on as if he had never called on Us when the harm first touched him. In that way We make what they have done appear good to the profligate. (Surah Yunus: 12)

The fact that a person remembers Allah at his most difficult times indicates a certain fact: he already knows that Allah is the only One in whom he can take refuge. When faced with distress, this fact that has been disregarded until then—since it challenged his personal interests—is recalled. However, when saved from it, he again returns to ingratitude. The Qur'an relates this situation with an example:

It is He Who conveys you on both land and sea so that when some of you are on a boat, running before a fair wind, rejoicing at it, and then a violent squall comes upon them and the waves come at them from every side and they realize there is no way of escape, they call on Allah, making their religion sincerely His: "If You rescue us from this, we will truly be among the thankful."

But then, when He does rescue them, they become rebellious in the earth without any right to do so. Mankind, your rebelliousness is only against yourselves. There is the enjoyment of the life of

the world and then you will return to Us and We will inform you about what you did. (Surah Yunus: 22-23)

It is quite hard to be saved from a ship that is about to sink in the midst of an ocean. In such a situation, a person faces certain death and none of the non-godly ideas upon which they relied until then are of any help. Only the One Who holds control over the sea, storm, ship and darkness can help them …and this is Allah, the Lord of Superior Might.

This simply means that all the agents one thinks they can turn to for help are powerless. This is an utterly desperate situation indeed. So a person on a sinking ship will suddenly start to pray, assured of Allah's existence and the fact that no one but Allah can save them. While praying, they humble themselves and turn to Allah in prayer. They fully comprehend that only Allah can save them from the desperate situation they are in and that they will never be saved unless Allah wills it.

People who don't normally pray to Allah, or even have denied His existence and who suddenly find themselves in this dire situation have, most probably, never thought about encountering death in this way before. They usually think of death as a distant possibility and thus remain indifferent towards life after death, and rely on their worldly supporters. Yet when faced with this dire situation of which they never before contemplated, the existence of these supporters become meaningless. Now, they do not falter in praying to Allah. At that moment they turn to Him in prayer, even if before they had always doubted the efficacy of asking for help from Him. No one reminds them now to pray to Allah, and indeed there is no need for this, for they know deep down, that it is Allah alone Who can help them.

Being so close to death, people will quickly review their life and imminent doom and suddenly start thinking about life after death; they will see that they have not engaged in deeds that are worthy of Paradise and suddenly this will be their greatest fear. They will think about how they spent their time in this life. They cannot now be arrogant nor any longer remain negligent or reckless towards issues concerning religion. They act as though they were not the ones who rejected Allah. Meanwhile, they are truly aware of their ungratefulness: that they feel the need to pray now that they are in a desperate situation indicates that, in actuality, they knew all along how they should be behaving. However, surprisingly, as the Qur'an informs us, a disbeliever who turns to Allah in these kinds of dire circumstances, acknowledging that Allah is the All-Mighty, all of a sudden loses his sincerity once the threat is over. In an amazing manner, they return to their former idolatrous ways. Their regret and relying on Allah is all of a sudden replaced by disbelief and ingratitude. They lapse back into their former state of heedlessness. The enlightenment they experienced in the face of danger suddenly disappears. With the security instilled by relief and the disappearance of danger, they never feel the need again to pray.

This abnormal psychology of the people of ignorance and their ingratitude is described in the Qur'an as follows:

Man never tires of praying for the good and if evil touches him, he despairs and loses hope. But if We let him taste mercy from Us after he has suffered hardship, then he says, "This is my due. I do not think that the Hour is going to come. And if am returned to my Lord, I will definitely find the best reward with Him." But We will inform those who disbelieve of what they did and make them suffer a ruthless punishment. When We grant blessing to a man, he turns away and draws aside but when any evil touches him, he is full of endless prayers! (Surah Fussilat: 49-51)

All these verses make mention of people who turn to Allah in trouble yet grow ungrateful when relieved. As said earlier, this is an attitude peculiar to idolaters, since the telling character trait of believers is their turning to Allah under all circumstances. Not only in times of difficulty, but also during times of ease and welfare, do they turn to Allah in prayer and glorify Him. They have assured faith in the fact that only Allah can help them.

Being ungrateful, as in the case of the one who prays to Allah in the ship but then becomes forgetful when relieved, is every soul's inclination. One of the purposes of this Qur'anic story about the ship is surely to condemn idolaters. However, everyone needs to take lessons from it and avoid assuming a similar attitude. That is to say, everyone needs to ponder this example, reconsider their own situation and sincerely correct their outlook.

Do you, for instance, ever consider your own situation?

Do you pray more strongly when you encounter a hardship, as in the case of the people in the ocean caught by a storm? Do you turn to Allah in prayer only when you encounter trouble? Do your prayers become more sincere in times of trouble? Are you prone barely to remembering Allah and paying less attention to prayer, when you are happy and relieved?

If this is the case, then you need to ponder your own situation. You need to draw lessons from this incident in the Qur'an, and strive not to be like the idolaters who prayed in the ship but then became ungrateful once relieved. You need to ask for forgiveness and repentance, for the duty of every person of faith is to avoid the character traits of disbelievers and idolaters and strive to assume the believers' character traits. One of these is their constant remembrance that they are Allah's servants, whether they are at ease or in trouble. They always turn to Allah in prayer and remain grateful.

We need to remember that praying only in times of trouble and hardship is an insincere attitude. Indeed, the Qur'an relates that even the most insolent people who revolted against Allah and His messenger prayed to Allah at very difficult times.

Pharaoh is the prototype of such a character. Pharaoh, who presented himself as a god in ancient Egypt and grew arrogant, treated the Prophet Musa (as) and his people cruelly and denied Allah, despite the many miracles he witnessed and the Prophet Musa's communication of Allah's message. Moreover, Pharaoh's denial and arrogance persisted until he met his death. Yet, once he realized that death was very near and that he had no hope for salvation, he started to pray desperately and claimed that he was also a Muslim—one who has submitted himself to Allah. This is related in the Qur'an as follows:

We brought the tribe of Israel across the sea and Pharaoh and his troops pursued them out of tyranny and enmity. Then, when he was on the point of drowning, he said, "I believe that there is no god but Him in Whom the tribe of Israel believe. I am one of the Muslims." "What, now! When previously you rebelled and were one of the corrupters? Today we will preserve your body so you can be a Sign for people who come after you. Surely many people are heedless of Our Signs." (Surah Yunus: 90-92)

Believers must also pay heed to this distorted understanding of prayer as related in the Qur'an. All believers who read the Qur'an are held responsible for its commandments, and with these verses, Allah warns believers and makes it clear that He expects His servants to include prayer in every aspect of their lives. This demonstrates a striking difference between the believers' understanding of prayer, and that of ignorant people.

Believers are submissive to our Lord, the One Who grants infinite blessings. They are aware that their true friend and protector is Allah. For this reason, under all circumstances, they pray and ask for help only from Him. The people of ignorance remember to pray only when they are in a dire need. Otherwise, they ascribe partners to Allah and expect help from these partners. They will surely receive a painful treatment in return for this ignorance, both in this world and beyond.

THE PROPHETS' PRAYERS RELATED IN THE QUR'AN

E very prophet, as related in the Qur'an, was sent to a society that was known for a certain feature. These societies denied the messengers sent to them and grew more and more insolent. The messengers were assigned with calling these disbelieving societies to the true religion, Allah's straight path, and making them turn their attention to the hereafter.

This was truly a difficult task. Aware that people would react negatively, the messenger sent to that community initially was all alone in assuming the noble duty of summoning people to the true religion, a religion which until then was not known to people or, if it was recognized, was not embraced by them. This task also included risks that put that messenger's life in jeopardy. For his calling them to Allah, people would torture him, commit treachery against him or, hating him more than anyone, attempt to kill him. The messenger could not be sure who would listen to him; even his own family might not have faith in him. Meanwhile, he was held responsible only to Allah and this was a heavy responsibility that had to be discharged under all circumstances… Whether people embraced Allah's religion and thus became people worthy of Paradise was not that messenger's ultimate responsibility; that was up to Allah; the messenger's only mission was to convey the message, a mission that has no parallels with anything else we know of. To be on such an assignment, against a society that is alien to the very idea, is indeed a grave task.

In reality, Allah exercises absolute control over everything in this world, so the messengers were not deterred or frightened by the numbers of disbelievers nor the power they held, aware that they were ultimately insignificant beside the power of Allah. So, thanks to the trust they put in Allah, every messenger accomplished their mission. Allah praises this superior character trait of His messengers in the Qur'an. The Qur'an reminds us that Allah's help is always at hand and that He protects His prophets from people's cruelty. In the Qur'an, Allah calls our attention to this fact while relating a danger the Prophet Muhammad (saas) went through on his migration from Mecca to Medina:

If you do not help him, Allah did help him when the disbelievers drove him out and there were two of them in the Cave. He said to his companion, "Do not be despondent, Allah is with us." Then Allah sent down His serenity upon him and reinforced him with troops you could not see. He made the word of the disbelievers undermost. It is the word of Allah which is uppermost. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat at-Tawba: 40)

In the Qur'an, Allah praises the Prophet's (saas) closeness to Him under all circumstances:

You have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allah, for all who put their hope in Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much. (Surat al-Ahzab: 21)

Prophets ask for help only from Allah. From the time they are assigned their mission, the prophets' one and only purpose becomes fulfilling their duty and summoning their peoples to Allah's straight path. Their

aspirations surely matched their purpose, for which reason we see the best examples of pure and sincere prayers in their supplications.

Examples of some of the prophets' prayers, which have been recorded in the Qur'an, are described in the following pages.

The Prophet Nuh's (as) Prayers

In the Qur'an, Allah praises the Prophet Nuh's (as) patience while he was summoning his people to Allah's religion. The Prophet Nuh (as) carried out a resolute struggle against his people who approached him with enmity. His turning to Allah in prayer under all circumstances provides an exemplary role model for believers. The Prophet Nuh (as) described his situation to Allah and prayed as follows:

He called upon his Lord: "I am overwhelmed, so help me!" (Surat al-Qamar: 10)

In another verse, the Prophet Nuh's (as) prayer is related as follows:

Nuh said, "My Lord! Do not leave a single one of the disbelievers on earth! If You leave any they will misguide Your servants and spawn nothing but more dissolute disbelievers. My Lord! forgive me and my parents and all who enter my house as believers, and all the men and women of the believers. But do not increase the wrongdoers except in ruin!" (Surah Nuh: 26-28)

Allah answered the Prophet Nuh's (as) prayer and commanded him to prepare for the Flood that was to come. Even though there was no sea or lake around, he set off to build an ark upon Allah's order.

While he was building the ark, his people continued to ridicule him. The Prophet Nuh (as) ignored them and continued to build the ark. Allah relates this in the Qur'an as follows:

He began to build the Ark and every time some nobles of his people passed him by, they ridiculed him. He said, "Though you ridicule us now, we will certainly ridicule you as you do us." (Surah Hud: 38)

Ultimately, Allah's promise came true and the Flood began:

So We opened the gates of heaven with torrential water and made the earth burst forth with gushing springs. And the waters met together in a way which was decreed. We bore him on a planked and well-caulked ship, which ran before Our eyes—a reward for him who had been rejected. (Surat al-Qamar: 11-14)

One of the people who drowned during the Flood was the Prophet Nuh's (as) son who was called to embark on the ark by his father before the Flood struck. But the son claimed that the

mountain in which he planned to take refuge would protect him and thus refused his father's call. (Surah Hud, 43)

In the Qur'an, Allah relates to us the Prophet Nuh's (as) request to Allah upon his son's death:

Nuh called out to his Lord and said, "My Lord, my son is one of my family and Your promise is surely the truth and You are the Justest of Judges."

He [Allah] said, "Nuh, he is definitely not of your family. He is someone whose action was not righteous. Do not, therefore, ask Me for something about which you have no knowledge. I admonish you lest you should be among the ignorant." (Surah Hud: 45-46)

While the Prophet Nuh (as) had called on Allah for the destruction of his people, he also wanted Him to protect the believers. However, his son was not a believer. Recognizing his mistake, the Prophet Nuh (as) felt regret and turned to Allah for His forgiveness:

He said, "My Lord, I seek refuge with You from asking You for anything about which I have no knowledge. If You do not forgive me and have mercy on me, I will be among the lost." (Surah Hud: 47)

The Prophet Ibrahim's (as) Prayers

The Prophet Ibrahim (as), who built the Ka'ba where millions of Muslims today go on Hajj (pilgrimage), is mentioned in the Qur'an as **"a community in himself."** (Surat an-Nahl:120) In compliance with Allah's commands, together with the Prophet Isma'il (as), his son, the Prophet Ibrahim (as) built a house so that believers could congregate at certain times of the year and remember Allah. The Qur'an refers to this house as the Ka'ba. These two noble men built this house as an act of worship and meanwhile called on Allah as follows:

And [mention] when Ibrahim built the foundations of the House with Isma'il [saying]: "Our Lord, accept this from us! You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." (Surat al-Baqara: 127)

The place where the Ka'ba was built has grown into a city (Mecca) today. For this house, the Prophet Ibrahim (as) prayed as follows:

And when Ibrahim said, "My Lord, make this a place of safety and provide its inhabitants with fruits—all of them who have faith in Allah and the Last Day," He [Allah] said, "I will let anyone who becomes a disbeliever enjoy himself a little but then I will drive him to the punishment of the Fire. What an evil destination!" (Surat al-Baqara: 126)

The Prophet Ibrahim's (as) prayers were not oriented only towards his own time but also intended for succeeding generations:

Our Lord, make us both Muslims submitted to You, and our descendants a Muslim community submitted to You. Show us our rites of worship and turn towards us. You are the Ever-Returning, the Most Merciful. Our Lord, raise up among them a Messenger from them to recite Your Signs to them and teach them the Book and Wisdom and purify them. You are the Almighty, the All-Wise. (Surat al-Baqara: 128-129)

Another of the Prophet Ibrahim's (as) prayers shows how he sought ways to draw closer to Allah:

When Ibrahim said, "My Lord, show me how You bring the dead to life." He asked, "Do you not then have faith?" He replied, "Indeed I do! But so that my heart may be at peace." He said, "Take four birds and train them to yourself. Then put a part of them on each mountain and call to them; they will come rushing to you. Know that Allah is Almighty, All-Wise." (Surat al-Baqara: 260)

The Prophet Ibrahim's (as) wish to witness how Allah resurrects the dead was not because of poor faith. On the contrary, he was a man of perfected faith, yet he aimed fully to comprehend the truth in which he had faith. He, in a quite sincere manner, wanted to see Allah's miracle and Allah granted this frank wish.

The Prophet Ibrahim's (as) father was a pagan. The Prophet Ibrahim (as) conveyed Allah's message to him, but his father rejected it. Despite this fact, the Prophet Ibrahim (as) asked Allah to forgive his father:

He said, "Peace be upon you. I will ask my Lord to forgive you. He has always honoured me. I will separate myself from you and all you call upon besides Allah and I will call upon my Lord. It may well be that, in calling on my Lord, I will not be disappointed." (Surah Maryam: 47-48)

It may seem strange that a prophet would ask Allah to forgive a disbeliever, so the Qur'an tells us why the Prophet Ibrahim (as) made this prayer:

It is not right for the Prophet and those who have faith to ask forgiveness for the idolaters—even if they are close relatives—after it has become clear to them that they are the companions of the blazing fire. Ibrahim would not have asked forgiveness for his father but for a promise he made to him, and when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he renounced him. Ibrahim was tender-hearted and forbearing. (Surat at-Tawba: 113-114)

The Prophet Ibrahim (as), the builder of the Ka'ba where millions of believers visit today, prayed for his sons, Isma'il, Ishaq and all believers:

Our Lord! I have settled some of my offspring by Your Sacred House in an uncultivated valley. Our Lord! Let them establish prayer! Make the hearts of mankind incline towards them and provide them with fruits, so that hopefully they will be thankful. Our Lord! You know what we keep hidden and what we divulge. Nothing is hidden from Allah either on the earth or in heaven. Praise be to Allah Who, despite my old age, has given me Isma'il and Ishaq. My Lord is the Hearer of Prayer. My Lord!

Make me and my descendants people who establish prayer. My Lord! Accept my prayer. Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the believers on the Day the Reckoning takes place. (Surah Ibrahim: 37-41)

As is seen, in his prayer, the Prophet Ibrahim (as) remembered Allah's attributes and also gave thanks to Him. What he asked from Allah were those things that would draw him nearer to Allah and help him be forgiven in the hereafter.

The Prophet Lut's (as) Prayers

The Prophet Lut (as), who is mentioned in the Qur'an as a prophet who was given "right judgment and knowledge," (Surat al-Anbiya': 74) conveyed Allah's message to his people for long years. However, his people, who transgressed Allah's limits and practiced homosexuality, always reacted negatively to him:

And Lut, when he said to his people, "Do you commit an obscenity not perpetrated before you by anyone in all the worlds? You come with lust to men instead of women. You are indeed a depraved people." The only answer of his people was to say, "Expel them from your city! They are people who keep themselves pure!" (Surat al- A'raf: 80-82)

The Prophet Lut's (as) people not only refused Allah's messenger but also openly challenged him. Over years, the Prophet Lut (as) summoned them to Allah's religion, and in the face of their intransigence, he called on to Allah thus:

He said, "My Lord, help me against the people of corruption!" (Surat al-'Ankabut: 30)

Allah answered the Prophet Lut's (as) call and the insolent people around him perished:

We will bring down on the inhabitants of this city a devastating punishment from heaven because of their deviance. We have left a Clear Sign of them behind for people who use their intellect. (Surat al-'Ankabut: 34-35)

As this example reveals, prayer may not always be for the good of individuals or happiness in this world and the next. As in the example of the Prophet Lut (as), many prophets also prayed for disbelievers' destruction.

The Prophet Ayyub's (as) Prayers

In four sections of the Qur'an, there is reference to the Prophet Ayyub (as), who displayed an exemplary patience that sets an example to all believers. The Prophet Ayyub (as), who was a chosen servant to whom Allah revealed (Surat an-Nisa: 163), was afflicted with a serious illness. Yet, his patience and trust in Allah never abated. With such a noble attitude, he is a role model for all believers to follow:

... We found him steadfast. What an excellent servant! He truly turned to his Lord. (Surah Sad: 44)

As well as the disease with which he was afflicted, the Prophet Ayyub (as) was also subjected to Satan's whisperings. However, he sincerely turned to Allah and sought His help:

Remember Our servant Ayyub when he called on his Lord: "Satan has afflicted me with exhaustion and suffering." (Surah Sad: 41)

Another verse relates the Prophet Ayyub's (as) heartfelt imploration thus:

And Ayyub when he called out to his Lord, "Great harm has afflicted me and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful." (Surat an-Anbiya': 83)

Allah answered the Prophet Ayyub's (as) call. As we read in Surat al Anbiya':

We responded to him and removed from him the harm which was afflicting him and restored his family to him, and the same again with them, as a mercy direct from Us and a Reminder to all worshippers. (Surat al-Anbiya': 84)

Allah puts believers to test in a number of ways. The Prophet Ayyub (as), who was a true servant of Allah, was also tested with a severe problem. In this life, similar troubles may also befall other believers. Consequently, a believer who encounters such a situation must always be aware that Allah does not put a burden on a soul greater than it can bear, no matter what the severity or the duration of that trouble may be.

The Prophet Yusuf's (as) Prayers

The Prophet Yusuf's (as) story conveys many good examples about prayer. The Prophet Yusuf (as) displayed all the signs of a strong faith with the trust, submission and loyalty he showed to Allah in the face of all his troubles.

The Prophet Yusuf's (as) difficulties (and those of his father, the Prophet Ya'qub (as)) began with the Prophet Yusuf (as) being thrown into a well by his jealous brothers. His father, the Prophet Ya'qub (as) maintained his submission to Allah in spite of the distressing loss of his son, Yusuf:

They [Yusuf's brothers] then produced his shirt with false blood on it. He [Ya'qub] said, "It is merely that your lower selves have suggested something to you which you did; but beauty lies in showing steadfastness. It is Allah alone Who is my Help in face of the event that you describe." (Surah Yusuf: 18)

As the verse shows, the Prophet Ya'qub (as), upon seeing his son's bloody shirt, said that he had to remain "steadfast" and thereby displayed an attitude of patience unique to a Muslim. Meanwhile, the Prophet Yusuf (as), who was left to die in the depths of a well, was miraculously rescued by a caravan passing nearby. The group rescued him thinking that they would be able to sell him, and regarded him as a piece of merchandise.

When the Prophet Yusuf (as), who was purchased as a slave by an Egyptian vizier, grew into maturity, Allah granted him **"knowledge and right judgment." (Surah Yusuf: 22)**

The Qur'an relates how the vizier's wife wanted to seduce Yusuf (as) and when he rejected her advances, she threatened him with imprisonment. Thereupon, the Prophet Yusuf (as) prayed :

He said, "My Lord, the prison is preferable to me than what they call on me to do. Unless You turn their guile away from me, it may well be that I will fall for them and so become a man of ignorance." (Surah Yusuf: 33)

As is seen in the verse, in his prayer, the Prophet Yusuf (as) sincerely made his situation clear to Allah. The Prophet Yusuf (as), who was imprisoned, then started to convey Allah's message to the people in prison:

[Yusuf said:] "My fellow-prisoners, are many lords better, or Allah, the only One, the Conqueror? What you serve apart from Him are only names which you and your forefathers have made up, there is no mandate for them from Allah. Discretion belongs only to Allah. His Order is to worship none but Him. That is in truth the straight and upright religion, but most of mankind simply do not know." (Surah Yusuf: 39-40)

After spending long years in prison, the vizier's wife confessed that the Prophet Yusuf (as) was innocent, and he was released. (Surah Yusuf: 51-54)

After all that he had been through, the Prophet Yusuf's (as) prayer was accepted and the sequence of events that began with his being thrown into a well ended with his being placed in authority over the treasures of Egypt:

And thus We established Yusuf in the land so he could live in any place he pleased... (Surah Yusuf: 56)

This way, the Prophet Yusuf (as), who held power in the country, gave thanks to Allah Who released him from prison and prayed to Him. His wish was to die as a Muslim and to be one of His true servants in the hereafter:

My Lord, You have granted power to me on earth and taught me the true meaning of events. Originator of the heavens and earth, You are my Friend in this world and the Next. So take me as a Muslim at my death and join me to the people who are righteous. (Surah Yusuf: 101)

The Prophet Shu'ayb's (as) Prayers

The Prophet Shu'ayb (as), who was sent to the people of Madyan, called his people, who transgressed Allah's limits, to have faith in Allah. (Surat al-A'raf: 85)

The answer of the people of Madyan to the Prophet Shu'ayb (as) was no different from that of the Prophet Nuh (as) and Lut (as). These people, who rejected the message conveyed by the Prophet Shu'ayb (as), threatened him and his adherents with exile:

The ruling circle of those of his people who were arrogant said, "We will drive you out of our city, Shu'ayb, you and those who have faith along with you, unless you return to our religion…" (Surat al-A'raf: 88)

Upon the insensitive and intimidating attitude of his people, the Prophet Shu'ayb (as) put his trust in Allah and turned to Him in prayer:

We would be inventing lies against Allah if we returned to your religion after Allah has saved us from it. We could never return to it unless Allah our Lord so willed. Our Lord encompasses everything in His Knowledge. We have put our trust in Allah. "Our Lord, judge between us and our people with truth. You are the best of judges." (Surat al- A'raf: 89)

Ultimately, what befell the people of the Prophet Lut (as) and Nuh (as) also happened to the people of Madyan. The Prophet Shu'ayb (as) called on Allah and upon His command, the people who rejected Allah's messenger perished:

So the earthquake seized them and morning found them lying flattened in their homes. As for those who denied Shu'ayb, it was as if they had never lived there. It was the people who denied Shu'ayb who were the lost. (Surat al-A'raf: 91-92)

The Prophet Sulayman's (as) Prayers

One of the most telling attributes of the Prophet Sulayman (as) was the great power he held. Allah granted him also many superior talents. Exercising control over jinn, and even talking to animals were among his superior abilities. His understanding of the language of animals is related in the Qur'an as follows:

Sulayman was Dawud's heir. He said, "Mankind! We have been taught the speech of birds and we have been given everything. This is indeed clear favor." (Surat an-Naml: 16)

The Prophet Sulayman (as), who gave thanks to Allah for the superiority granted to him, turned to Allah in prayer:

... "My Lord, keep me thankful for the blessing You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and keep me acting rightly, pleasing You, and admit me, by Your mercy, among Your servants who are true." (Surat an-Naml: 19)

Apart from the Prophet Sulayman's (as) special talents, he was granted ample material wealth. In return for this, he gave thanks to Allah and prayed thus:

He said, "My Lord, forgive me and give me a kingdom the like of which will never be granted to anyone after me. Truly You are the Ever-Giving." (Surah Sad: 35)

In previous pages, we stressed that believers must avoid limiting their prayers to personal wishes or mundane desires. In fact, the Prophet Sulayman's (as) asking for **"a kingdom the like of which will never be granted to anyone"** is far from being a mundane wish: it is, in fact, a wish intended for the hereafter. We can understand this also from the verse, **"... Truly do I love the love of good with a view to the glory of my Lord." (Surah Sad: 32)**

If a person puts their material resources into use to seek Allah's good pleasure and if this wealth draws them nearer to Allah and makes them remember Allah, then there is no reason to feel hesitant about asking for worldly blessings, for these blessings are the means to drawing them nearer to the hereafter.

The Prophet Zakariyya's (as) Prayers

Three surahs in the Qur'an refer to the Prophet Zakariyya's (as) prayers. When he grew old, he asked Allah for a successor who would uphold faith amongst his people after his death. Being too old a man to have a child and having an infertile wife, he called on Allah as follows:

When he called on his Lord in secret and said, "My Lord, my bones have lost their strength and my head is crowned with white, but in calling on You, My Lord, I have never been disappointed. I fear my relatives when I am gone and my wife is barren, so give me an heir from You to be my inheritor and the inheritor of the family of Ya'qub, and make him, my Lord, pleasing to You." (Surah Maryam: 3-6)

Then and there Zakariyya called on his Lord and said, "O Lord, grant me by Your favor an upright child. You are the Hearer of Prayer." (Surah Al Imran: 38)

And Zakariyya when he called out to his Lord, "My Lord, do not leave me on my own, You are the Best of Inheritors." (Surat al-Anbiya': 89)

As the verses above highlight, the Prophet Zakariyya (as) called on his Lord secretly. This is one of the most evident signs of sincerity. Indeed, Allah answered his prayer which was truly heartfelt:

We responded to him and gave him Yahya, restoring for him his wife's fertility. They outdid one another in good actions, calling out to Us in yearning and in awe, and humbling themselves to Us. (Surat al-Anbiya': 90)

Zakariyya! We give you the good news of a boy named Yahya, a name we have given to no one else before. (Surah Maryam: 7)

The angels called out to him while he was standing in prayer in the Upper Room: "Allah gives you the good news of Yahya, who will come to confirm a Word from Allah, and will be a leader and a celibate, a prophet and one of the righteous." (Surah Al Imran: 39)

According to another verse, the Prophet Zakariyya (as) was in awe at the notion of having been granted a son despite his old age. The angel whom Allah sent to give him glad tidings of a son reminded him of Allah's might:

He said, "My Lord! How can I have a boy when my wife is barren and I have reached advanced old age?" [An angel] said, "It will be so! Your Lord says, 'That is easy for me to do. I created you before, when you were not anything.' " (Surah Maryam: 8-9)

In previous sections, we emphasized that Allah answers His servants' prayers and that He is the sole friend and helper of people who wholeheartedly call on Him. This being the case, Allah granted a son to the Prophet Zakariyya (as), even though it seemed impossible.

The Prophet Yunus's (as) Prayers

In the Qur'an, Allah refers to the Prophet Yunus (as) as follows:

Yunus too was one of the Messengers. When he ran away to the fully laden ship and cast lots and lost. Then the fish devoured him and he was to blame. (Surat as-Saffat: 139-142)

The Prophet Yunus (as) abandoned his people to whom Allah sent him as a prophet. As these verses convey, he got on a ship, where he "cast lots and lost." As we understand from the Qur'an, the Prophet Yunus (as), who could not persevere in the task Allah had given to him and abandoned his people, was thrown out of the ship to the sea where he was swallowed by a fish. In regret, the Prophet Yunus (as) turned to Allah in prayer, as in:

… "There is no god but You! Glory be to You! Truly I have been one of the wrongdoers." (Surat al-Anbiya': 87)

In return for his sincere prayer, Allah miraculously rescued him:

We responded to him and rescued him from his grief. That is how We rescue the believers. (Surat al-Anbiya': 88)

Then, Allah sent the Prophet Yunus (as) to an obedient society:

We sent him to a hundred thousand or even more. They had faith and so We gave them enjoyment for a time. (Surat as-Saffat: 147-148)

In previous pages, we said that Allah may answer a prayer in the form of a "cause and effect," or if He wills, He may miraculously answer a prayer. This is easy for the Lord of the heavens and earth and everything in between. In the Prophet Yunus's (as) case, Allah removed all seeming obstacles and saved him from a fish's stomach. This is a striking example showing that people should never despair of Allah's forgiveness and be steadfast in their prayers. As long as one wholeheartedly turns to Allah, he will encounter a definite response.

The Prophet Musa's (as) Prayers

Allah sent the Prophet Musa (as) to the Children of Israel as a messenger. When he was still a baby, his life was put in jeopardy. Pharaoh ordered all male children killed and the females spared for slavery. Allah inspired his mother to save him. She followed what was revealed to her and put him into a chest and sent it floating down the Nile. Pharaoh and his family found Musa (as) and adopted him as their own son. (Surat al-Qasas: 7-8) When Musa (as) grew into adulthood in Pharaoh's palace, Allah granted him **"judgment and knowledge." (Surat al-Qasas: 14)**

The Qur'an provides an account of an event that led the Prophet Musa (as) turn to Allah in prayer:

He entered the city at a time when its inhabitants were unaware and found two men fighting there—one from his party and the other from his enemy. The one from his party asked for his support against the other from his enemy. So Musa hit him, dealing him a fatal blow. He said, "This is part of Satan's handiwork. He truly is an outright and misleading enemy." (Surat al-Qasas: 15)

Upon this incident, the Prophet Musa (as) asked for forgiveness from Allah and promised Him he would not support evildoers again:

He said, "My Lord, I have wronged myself. Forgive me." So He forgave him. He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. He said, "My Lord, because of Your blessing to me, I will never be a supporter of evildoers." (Surat al-Qasas: 16-17)

When the news about this incident was heard, the prominent people of the city planned to kill the Prophet Musa (as). Under this circumstance, the Prophet Moses (as) again turned to Allah in prayer:

So he left there fearful and on his guard, saying, "My Lord, rescue me from the wrongdoing people!" (Surat al-Qasas: 21)

Allah answered the Prophet Musa's (as) prayer and led him to a secure place. Meanwhile, he never lost his bond with Allah and implored to Him:

When turned his face in the direction of Madyan, he said, "Hopefully my Lord will guide me to the right way." When he arrived at the water of Madyan, he found a crowd of people drawing water there. Standing apart from them, he found two women, holding back their sheep. He said, "What are you two doing here?" They said, "We cannot draw water until the shepherds have driven off their sheep. You see our father is a very old man." So he drew water for them and then withdrew into the shade and said, "My Lord, I am truly in need of any good You have in store for me." One of them came walking shyly up to him and said, "My father invites you so that he can pay you your wage for drawing water for us." When he came to him and told him the whole story he said, "Have no fear, you have escaped from wrongdoing people." (Surat al-Qasas: 22-25)

These sequence of events led the Prophet Musa (as) to settle in Madyan, where he established a family. After about 8-10 years, Musa (as) and his family left Madyan. On his way to the valley of Tuwa, where he was destined to receive Allah's first revelation, Allah commanded him to go to Pharaoh to convey His message. However, the Prophet Musa (as) felt concerned and told Allah frankly that he was afraid, hesitant and insecure:

He said, "My Lord, I killed one of them and I am afraid they will kill me; and my brother Harun is more eloquent than me so send him with me to support me and back me up. I fear they will talk me out of it." (Surat al-Qasas: 33-34)

As we learn from the Qur'an, it was in Musa's (as) nature to feel excited from time to time and he was afraid that this character trait would hinder him from fulfilling his duty of conveying the message. For this, he turned to Allah in prayer:

He said, "O Lord, expand my breast for me and make my task easy for me. Loosen the knot in my tongue so that they will understand my words. Assign me a helper from my family, my brother Harun. Strengthen my back by him and let him share in my task, so that we can glorify You much and remember You much, for You are watching us." (Surah Taha: 25-35)

In return for the Prophet Musa's (as) sincerity in his prayer, Allah took him under His protection and told him:

He [Allah] said, "We will reinforce you with your brother and by Our Signs will give you both authority, so that they will not be able to lay a hand on you. You and those who follow you will be the victors." (Surat al-Qasas: 35)

The Prophet Musa's (as) miracles made some of Pharaoh's magicians and a small group of young people embrace faith. Meanwhile, Pharaoh and the majority of his people insisted on denial. The Prophet Musa (as) prayed as follows:

Musa said, "Our Lord, You have given Pharaoh and his ruling circle finery and wealth in the life of the world. Our Lord, is it so they may lead [us] off from Your way? Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts; they do not have faith until they see the painful punishment." He said, "Your request is answered, so go straight and do not follow the way of those who have no knowledge." (Surah Yunus: 88-89)

Following the Prophet Musa's (as) prayer, Pharaoh and all the disbelieving people around him were destroyed and the Children of Israel left Egypt. After a while, leaving his tribe under Harun's care, Musa (as) went to Mount Sinai, where he was to receive Allah's revelation. Upon receiving the revelation, he asked Allah:

"… My Lord, show me Yourself so that I may look at You!.." (Surat al-A'raf: 143)

Allah answered the Prophet Musa's (as) wish as follows:

"You will not see Me, but look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its place, then you will see Me." But when His Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He crushed it flat and Musa fell unconscious to the ground. When he regained consciousness he said, "Glory be to You! I repent to You and I am the first of the believers!" He said, "Musa, I have chosen you over all mankind for My Message and My Word. Take what I have given you and be among the thankful." (Surat al-A'raf: 143-144)

During Musa's (as) absence, Harun (as) led the Children of Israel. Meanwhile, the unbelievers among Musa's (as) people took advantage of his absence. Insolent to Harun (as), they built a statue of a calf and worshipped it. Upon this, Musa (as) chose the believers in his tribe and together with them, he set off to the appointed place Allah had revealed to him previously. Yet, before reaching there, they were terribly shaken. Musa (as) asked for forgiveness both for himself and the believers traveling with him:

… "My Lord, if You had willed, You could have destroyed them previously and me as well. Would you destroy us for what the fools among us did? It was only a trial from You by which You misguided those You willed and guided those You willed. You are our Protector so forgive us and have mercy on us. You are the Best of Forgivers. Prescribe good for us in the world and the hereafter. We have truly turned to You." He [Allah] said, "As for My punishment, I strike with it anyone I will. My mercy extends to all things but I will prescribe it for those who do their duty and pay alms, and those who believe in Our Signs." (Surat al-A'raf: 155-156)

The most telling attributes of the Prophet Musa's (as) prayers related in the Qur'an are his sincerity and frankness. He prayed to Allah sincerely and asked for help from Him and by Allah's will, what befell him made him grow into a prophet holding great power.

One of the most important attributes of prayer is sincerity and that it be heartfelt. At this point, one of the obstacles that may mislead one is, out of feelings of embarrassment towards Allah, disinclination to confess one's sins and flaws to Him. This attitude may make some people pray very "formally" and, either out of embarrassment or pride, hinder them from divulging their troubles to Allah, although He knows our every sin, mistake, and any irrational or erroneous attitudes or thoughts.

This being the case, what we need to do is to turn to Allah in sincerity and frankness and share our every secret with Him. The inner awe one has for Allah is definitely not an obstacle that will turn the relation between Allah and His servant into "formality," but an encouragement that will draw him closer to his Lord and make him more submissive and sincere to Him.

The Prophet Isa's (as) Prayers

The Qur'an refers to Isa (as) as follows:

… His name is the Messiah, 'Isa, son of Maryam, of high esteem in the world and the hereafter, and one of those brought near. (Surah Al Imran: 45)

In the Qur'an, Isa's (as) disciples asked for a table of food from Allah. This event, which is related in Surat al-Ma'ida (Ma'ida means "table" in Arabic), is as follows:

And when the Disciples said, ''Isa son of Maryam! Can your Lord send down a table to us out of heaven?" He said, "Heed Allah if you are believers!" They said, "We want to eat from it and for our hearts to be at peace and to know that you have told us the truth and to be among those who witness it." (Surat al- Ma'ida: 112-113)

Beneath this request lies the disciples' desire to see a miraculous event. Isa (as) told them the superfluousness of this wish. However, they insisted, saying that this way their hearts would be at peace. Upon this, Isa (as) called to Allah and while doing this, remembered Him with His beautiful names. The Qur'an states this prayer of Isa (as) as follows:

'Isa son of Maryam said, "Allah, our Lord, send down a table to us out of heaven to be a feast for us, for the first and last of us, and as a Sign from You. Provide for us! You are the Best of Providers!" (Surat al-Mai'da: 114)

Allah answered Isa's (as) call and commanded Him:

Allah said, "I will send it down to you but if anyone among you disbelieve after that, I will punish him with a punishment the like of which I will not inflict on anyone else in all the worlds!" (Surat al-Mai'da: 115)

Isa's (as) other prayer conveyed in Surat al-Ma'ida shows us how he asked for forgiveness and protection for his disciples:

And when Allah says, "'Isa son of Maryam! Did you say to people, 'Take me and my mother as gods besides Allah?'" he will say, "Glory be to You! It is not for me to say what I have no right to say! If I had said it, then You would have known it. You know what is in my self but I do not know what is in Your Self. You are the Knower of all unseen things."

"I said to them nothing but what You ordered me to say: 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' I was a witness against them as long as I remained among them, but when You took me back to You, You were the One watching over them. You are Witness of all things. If You punish them, they are Your servants. If you forgive them, You are the Almighty, the All-Wise." (Surat al-Mai'da: 116-118)

The Prophet Muhammad's (saas) Prayers Related in the Qur'an

The Prophet Muhammad (saas), who is praised in the Qur'an with the verse, **"Indeed you are truly vast in character." (Surat al-Qalam:4)** spared some of his night-time for the remembrance of Allah and worshipping. This is expressed in one of the verses as follows:

Your Lord knows that you stay up nearly two-thirds of the night—or half of it, or a third of it—and a group of those with you. Allah determines the night and day. He knows you will not keep count of it, so He has turned towards you… (Surat al-Muzzammil: 20)

The Qur'an relates to us the Prophet Muhammad's (saas) love for believers. In the following verse, Allah commands him to ask for forgiveness for believers:

It is a mercy from Allah that you were gentle with them. If you had been rough or hard of heart, they would have scattered from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult with them about the matter. Then when you have reached a firm decision, put your trust in Allah. Allah loves those who put their trust in Him. (Surah Al Imran: 159)

Many verses refer to the Prophet Muhammad's (saas) prayers. One of them reads as follows:

Say, "O Allah! Master of the Kingdom! You give sovereignty to whoever You will You take sovereignty from whoever You will. You exalt whoever You will You abase whoever You will. All good is in Your hands. You have power over all things." (Surah Al Imran: 26)

As is the case with all the other prophets, prominent people in Mecca also threatened the Prophet Muhammad (saas) and he was exposed to the whisperings of Satan. In such situations, he asked Allah for relief. As the Qur'an narrates:

Say: "My Lord, I seek refuge with You from the goadings of the satans, and I seek refuge with You, my Lord, from their presence." (Surat al-Muminun: 97-98)

The last verse of the Surat al-Muminun conveys one of the Prophet's (saas) prayers:

Say: "My Lord, forgive and be merciful! You are the Best of the Merciful." (Surat al-Muminun: 118)

Some of the prayers of the Prophet (saas) as we learn from the hadiths are as follows:

OAllah, grant us good in this world and the good in the Hereafter and save us from the torment of the Fire. (Muslim)

There is no god but Allah, the One, having no partner with Him. Sovereignty belongs to Him and all the praise is due to Him, and He is Potent over everything. OAllah, grant me pardon, have mercy upon me, direct me to righteousness and provide me sustenance. (Muslim)

OAllah, I seek refuge in You from the trial of Hell-Fire;and from the torment of Hell-Fire, and from the trial of the grave and torment of the grave. OAllah, wash away my sins with snow and hail water, purify my heart from sin as is purified the white garment from the dirt, and keep away at a distance the sins fro me as yawns the distance between the East and West;OAllah, I seek refuge in You from sloth, from senility, from sin, and from debt. (Muslim)

OAllah, Iseek refuge in You from incapacity, from indolence, from cowardice, from senility, from miserliness. (Muslim)

CONCLUSION

I n daily life, putting the Qur'anic understanding of prayer which is related in this book into practice is quite important. However, a majority of people, either because they are ignorant of the Qur'an or possess insufficient knowledge about it, never once turn to Allah sincerely as the Qur'an describes.

This book explains the importance of remembering Allah, which is stressed in the verse, **"… And remembrance of Allah is greater still." (Surat al-Ankabut: 45)** Paying due care to what has been related throughout this book and striving to pray as Allah wills is a responsibility upon all of us.

This is a great responsibility as well as a means that will save our eternal lives, for those who fail to pray are doomed to eternal torment in Hell. A verse reads:

Your Lord says, "Call on Me and I will answer you. Those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell abject." (Surah Ghafir: 60)

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

Darwinism, in other words the theory of evolution, was put forward with the aim of denying the fact of creation, but is in truth nothing but failed, unscientific nonsense. This theory, which claims that life emerged by chance from inanimate matter, was invalidated by the scientific evidence of clear "design" in the universe and in living things. In this way, science confirmed the fact that Allah created the universe and the living things in it. The propaganda carried out today in order to keep the theory of evolution alive is based solely on the distortion of the scientific facts, biased interpretation, and lies and falsehoods disguised as science.

Yet this propaganda cannot conceal the truth. The fact that the theory of evolution is the greatest deception in the history of science has been expressed more and more in the scientific world over the last 20-30 years. Research carried out after the 1980s in particular has revealed that the claims of Darwinism are totally unfounded, something that has been stated by a large number of scientists. In the United States in particular, many scientists from such different fields as biology, biochemistry and paleontology recognize the invalidity of Darwinism and employ the concept of intelligent design to account for the origin of life. This "intelligent design" is a scientific expression of the fact that Allah created all living things.

We have examined the collapse of the theory of evolution and the proofs of creation in great scientific detail in many of our works, and are still continuing to do so. Given the enormous importance of this subject, it will be of great benefit to summarize it here.

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although this doctrine goes back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the nineteenth century. The most important development that made it the top topic of the world of science was Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859. In this book, he denied that Allah created different living species on Earth separately, for he claimed that all living beings had a common ancestor and had diversified over time through small changes. Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties of the Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

Darwin invested all of his hopes in new scientific discoveries, which he expected to solve these difficulties. However, contrary to his expectations, scientific findings expanded the dimensions of these difficulties. The defeat of Darwinism in the face of science can be reviewed under three basic topics:

1) The theory cannot explain how life originated on Earth.

2) No scientific finding shows that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any evolutionary power at all.

3) The fossil record proves the exact opposite of what the theory suggests.

In this section, we will examine these three basic points in general outlines:

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

The theory of evolution posits that all living species evolved from a single living cell that emerged on the primitive Earth 3.8 billion years ago. How a single cell could generate millions of complex living species and, if such an evolution really occurred, why traces of it cannot be observed in the fossil record are some of the questions that the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, we need to ask: How did this "first cell" originate?

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and any kind of supernatural intervention, it maintains that the "first cell" originated coincidentally within the laws of nature, without any design, plan or arrangement. According to the theory, inanimate matter must have produced a living cell as a result of coincidences. Such a claim, however, is inconsistent with the most unassailable rules of biology.

"Life Comes from Life"

In his book, Darwin never referred to the origin of life. The primitive understanding of science in his time rested on the assumption that living beings had a very simple structure. Since medieval times, spontaneous generation, which asserts that non-living materials came together to form living organisms, had been widely accepted. It was commonly believed that insects came into being from food leftovers, and mice from wheat. Interesting experiments were conducted to prove this theory. Some wheat was placed on a dirty piece of cloth, and it was believed that mice would originate from it after a while.

Similarly, maggots developing in rotting meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, it was later understood that worms did not appear on meat spontaneously, but were carried there by flies in the form of larvae, invisible to the naked eye.

Even when Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species*, the belief that bacteria could come into existence from non-living matter was widely accepted in the world of science.

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, that disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said: "Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."[1]

For a long time, advocates of the theory of evolution resisted these findings. However, as the development of science unraveled the complex structure of the cell of a living being, the idea that life could come into being coincidentally faced an even greater impasse.

Inconclusive Efforts in the Twentieth Century

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the twentieth century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 1930s, he tried to prove that a living cell could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession:

Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms.[2]

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve this problem. The best known experiment was carried out by the American chemist Stanley Miller in 1953. Combining the gases he alleged to have existed in the primordial Earth's atmosphere in an experiment set-up, and adding energy to the mixture, Miller synthesized several organic molecules (amino acids) present in the structure of proteins.

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, for the atmosphere used in the experiment was very different from the real Earth conditions.[3]

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.[4]

All the evolutionists' efforts throughout the twentieth century to explain the origin of life ended in failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada, from the San Diego Scripps Institute accepts this fact in an article published in *Earth* magazine in 1998:

Today as we leave the twentieth century, we still face the biggest unsolved problem that we had when we entered the twentieth century: How did life originate on Earth?[5]

The Complex Structure of Life

The primary reason why the theory of evolution ended up in such a great impasse regarding the origin of life is that even those living organisms deemed to be the simplest have incredibly complex structures. The cell of a living thing is more complex than all of our man-made technological products. Today, even in the most developed laboratories of the world, a living cell cannot be produced by bringing organic chemicals together.

The conditions required for the formation of a cell are too great in quantity to be explained away by coincidences. The probability of proteins, the building blocks of a cell, being synthesized coincidentally, is 1 in 10^{950} for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 10^{50} is considered to be impossible in practical terms.

The DNA molecule, which is located in the nucleus of a cell and which stores genetic information, is an incredible databank. If the information coded in DNA were written down, it would make a giant library consisting of an estimated 900 volumes of encyclopedias consisting of 500 pages each.

A very interesting dilemma emerges at this point: DNA can replicate itself only with the help of some specialized proteins (enzymes). However, the synthesis of these enzymes can be realized only by the information coded in DNA. As they both depend on each other, they have to exist at the same time for replication. This brings the scenario that life originated by itself to a deadlock. Prof. Leslie Orgel, an evolutionist of repute from the University of San Diego, California, confesses this fact in the September 1994 issue of the *Scientific American* magazine:

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means.[6]

No doubt, if it is impossible for life to have originated from natural causes, then it has to be accepted that life was "created" in a supernatural way. This fact explicitly invalidates the theory of evolution, whose main purpose is to deny creation.

Imaginary Mechanisms of Evolution

The second important point that negates Darwin's theory is that both concepts put forward by the theory as "evolutionary mechanisms" were understood to have, in reality, no evolutionary power.

Darwin based his evolution allegation entirely on the mechanism of "natural selection." The importance he placed on this mechanism was evident in the name of his book: *The Origin of Species, By Means of Natural Selectio*n…

Natural selection holds that those living things that are stronger and more suited to the natural conditions of their habitats will survive in the struggle for life. For example, in a deer herd under the threat of attack by wild animals, those that can run faster will survive. Therefore, the deer herd will be comprised of faster and stronger individuals. However, unquestionably, this mechanism will not cause deer to evolve and transform themselves into another living species, for instance, horses.

Therefore, the mechanism of natural selection has no evolutionary power. Darwin was also aware of this fact and had to state this in his book *The Origin of Species*:

Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.[7]

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these "favorable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science at that time. According to the French biologist Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829), who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation. He asserted that these traits, which accumulated from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, he claimed that giraffes evolved from antelopes; as they struggled to eat the leaves of high trees, their necks were extended from generation to generation.

Darwin also gave similar examples. In his book *The Origin of Specie*s, for instance, he said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.[8]

However, the laws of inheritance discovered by Gregor Mendel (1822-84) and verified by the science of genetics, which flourished in the twentieth century, utterly demolished the legend that acquired traits were passed on to subsequent generations. Thus, natural selection fell out of favor as an evolutionary mechanism.

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

In order to find a solution, Darwinists advanced the "Modern Synthetic Theory," or as it is more commonly known, Neo-Darwinism, at the end of the 1930's. Neo-Darwinism added mutations, which are distortions formed in the genes of living beings due to such external factors as radiation or replication errors, as the "cause of favorable variations" in addition to natural mutation.

Today, the model that stands for evolution in the world is Neo-Darwinism. The theory maintains that millions of living beings formed as a result of a process whereby numerous complex organs of these organisms (e.g., ears, eyes, lungs, and wings) underwent "mutations," that is, genetic disorders. Yet, there is an outright scientific fact that totally undermines this theory: Mutations do not cause living beings to develop; on the contrary, they are always harmful.

The reason for this is very simple: DNA has a very complex structure, and random effects can only harm it. The American geneticist B.G. Ranganathan explains this as follows:

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.[9]

Not surprisingly, no mutation example, which is useful, that is, which is observed to develop the genetic code, has been observed so far. All mutations have proved to be harmful. It was understood that mutation, which is presented as an "evolutionary mechanism," is actually a genetic occurrence that harms living things, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer.) Of course, a destructive mechanism cannot be an "evolutionary mechanism." Natural selection, on the other hand, "can do nothing by itself," as Darwin also accepted. This fact shows us that there is no "evolutionary mechanism" in nature. Since no evolutionary mechanism exists, no such any imaginary process called "evolution" could have taken place.

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

The clearest evidence that the scenario suggested by the theory of evolution did not take place is the fossil record.

According to this theory, every living species has sprung from a predecessor. A previously existing species turned into something else over time and all species have come into being in this way. In other words, this transformation proceeds gradually over millions of years.

Had this been the case, numerous intermediary species should have existed and lived within this long transformation period.

For instance, some half-fish/half-reptiles should have lived in the past which had acquired some reptilian traits in addition to the fish traits they already had. Or there should have existed some reptile-birds, which acquired some bird traits in addition to the reptilian traits they already had. Since these would be in a transitional phase, they should be disabled, defective, crippled living beings. Evolutionists refer to these imaginary creatures, which they believe to have lived in the past, as "transitional forms."

If such animals ever really existed, there should be millions and even billions of them in number and variety. More importantly, the remains of these strange creatures should be present in the fossil record. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin explained:

If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed.... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.[10]

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the nineteenth century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All of the fossils, contrary to the evolutionists' expectations, show that life appeared on Earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

One famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager, admits this fact, even though he is an evolutionist:

The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find – over and over again – not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.[11]

This means that in the fossil record, all living species suddenly emerge as fully formed, without any intermediate forms in between. This is just the opposite of Darwin's assumptions. Also, this is very strong evidence that all living things are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor is that it was created. This fact is admitted also by the widely known evolutionist biologist Douglas Futuyma:

Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.[12]

Fossils show that living beings emerged fully developed and in a perfect state on the earth. That means that "the origin of species," contrary to Darwin's supposition, is not evolution, but creation.

The Tale of Human Evolution

The subject most often brought up by advocates of the theory of evolution is the subject of the origin of man. The Darwinist claim holds that modern man evolved from ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, some "transitional forms" between modern man and his ancestors are supposed to have existed. According to this completely imaginary scenario, four basic "categories" are listed:

1. Australopithecus
2. Homo habilis
3. Homo erectus

4. Homo sapiens

Evolutionists call man's so-called first ape-like ancestors *Australopithecus*, which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various *Australopithecus* specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, shows that these apes belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.[13]

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "*homo*," that is "man." According to their claim, the living beings in the *Homo* series are more developed than *Australopithecus*. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging different fossils of these creatures in a particular order. This scheme is imaginary because it has never been proved that there is an evolutionary relation between these different classes. Ernst Mayr, one of the twentieth century's most important evolutionists, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that "particularly historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of *Homo sapiens*, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation."[14]

By outlining the link chain as *Australopithecus* > *Homo habilis* > *Homo erectus* > *Homo sapiens,* evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that *Australopithecus, Homo habilis*, and *Homo erectus* lived at different parts of the world at the same time.[15]

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as *Homo erectus* have lived up until very modern times. *Homo sapiens neandarthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.[16]

This situation apparently indicates the invalidity of the claim that they are ancestors of one another. A paleontologist from Harvard University, Stephen Jay Gould, explains this deadlock of the theory of evolution, although he is an evolutionist himself:

What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (A. africanus, the robust australopithecines, and H. habilis), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.[17]

Put briefly, the scenario of human evolution, which is "upheld" with the help of various drawings of some "half ape, half human" creatures appearing in the media and course books, that is, frankly, by means of propaganda, is nothing but a tale with no scientific foundation.

Lord Solly Zuckerman, one of the most famous and respected scientists in the U.K., who carried out research on this subject for years and studied *Australopithecus* fossils for 15 years, finally concluded, despite being an evolutionist himself, that there is, in fact, no such family tree branching out from ape-like creatures to man.

Zuckerman also made an interesting "spectrum of science" ranging from those he considered scientific to those he considered unscientific. According to Zuckerman's spectrum, the most "scientific"—that is, depending on concrete data—fields of science are chemistry and physics. After them come the biological sciences and then the social sciences. At the far end of the spectrum, which is the part considered to be most "unscientific," are "extra-sensory perception"—concepts such as telepathy and sixth sense—and finally "human evolution." Zuckerman explains his reasoning:

We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpretation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist] anything is

possible – and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.[18]

The tale of human evolution boils down to nothing but the prejudiced interpretations of some fossils unearthed by certain people, who blindly adhere to their theory.

Technology in the Eye and the Ear

Another subject that remains unanswered by evolutionary theory is the excellent quality of perception in the eye and the ear.

Before passing on to the subject of the eye, let us briefly answer the question of how we see. Light rays coming from an object fall oppositely on the eye's retina. Here, these light rays are transmitted into electric signals by cells and reach a tiny spot at the back of the brain, the "center of vision." These electric signals are perceived in this center as an image after a series of processes. With this technical background, let us do some thinking.

The brain is insulated from light. That means that its inside is completely dark, and that no light reaches the place where it is located. Thus, the "center of vision" is never touched by light and may even be the darkest place you have ever known. However, you observe a luminous, bright world in this pitch darkness.

The image formed in the eye is so sharp and distinct that even the technology of the twentieth century has not been able to attain it. For instance, look at the book you are reading, your hands with which you are holding it, and then lift your head and look around you. Have you ever seen such a sharp and distinct image as this one at any other place? Even the most developed television screen produced by the greatest television producer in the world cannot provide such a sharp image for you. This is a three-dimensional, colored, and extremely sharp image. For more than 100 years, thousands of engineers have been trying to achieve this sharpness. Factories, huge premises were established, much research has been done, plans and designs have been made for this purpose. Again, look at a TV screen and the book you hold in your hands. You will see that there is a big difference in sharpness and distinction. Moreover, the TV screen shows you a two-dimensional image, whereas with your eyes, you watch a three-dimensional perspective with depth.

For many years, tens of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV and achieve the vision quality of the eye. Yes, they have made a three-dimensional television system, but it is not possible to watch it without putting on special 3-D glasses; moreover, it is only an artificial three-dimension. The background is more blurred, the foreground appears like a paper setting. Never has it been possible to produce a sharp and distinct vision like that of the eye. In both the camera and the television, there is a loss of image quality.

Evolutionists claim that the mechanism producing this sharp and distinct image has been formed by chance. Now, if somebody told you that the television in your room was formed as a result of chance, that all of its atoms just happened to come together and make up this device that produces an image, what would you think? How can atoms do what thousands of people cannot?

If a device producing a more primitive image than the eye could not have been formed by chance, then it is very evident that the eye and the image seen by the eye could not have been formed by chance. The same situation applies to the ear. The outer ear picks up the available sounds by the auricle and directs them to the middle ear, the middle ear transmits the sound vibrations by intensifying them, and the inner ear sends these

vibrations to the brain by translating them into electric signals. Just as with the eye, the act of hearing finalizes in the center of hearing in the brain.

The situation in the eye is also true for the ear. That is, the brain is insulated from sound just as it is from light. It does not let any sound in. Therefore, no matter how noisy is the outside, the inside of the brain is completely silent. Nevertheless, the sharpest sounds are perceived in the brain. In your completely silent brain, you listen to symphonies, and hear all of the noises in a crowded place. However, were the sound level in your brain was measured by a precise device at that moment, complete silence would be found to be prevailing there.

As is the case with imagery, decades of effort have been spent in trying to generate and reproduce sound that is faithful to the original. The results of these efforts are sound recorders, high-fidelity systems, and systems for sensing sound. Despite all of this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavor, no sound has yet been obtained that has the same sharpness and clarity as the sound perceived by the ear. Think of the highest-quality hi-fi systems produced by the largest company in the music industry. Even in these devices, when sound is recorded some of it is lost; or when you turn on a hi-fi you always hear a hissing sound before the music starts. However, the sounds that are the products of the human body's technology are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospherics as does a hi-fi; rather, it perceives sound exactly as it is, sharp and clear. This is the way it has been since the creation of man.

So far, no man-made visual or recording apparatus has been as sensitive and successful in perceiving sensory data as are the eye and the ear. However, as far as seeing and hearing are concerned, a far greater truth lies beyond all this.

To Whom Does the Consciousness That Sees and Hears within the Brain Belong?

Who watches an alluring world in the brain, listens to symphonies and the twittering of birds, and smells the rose?

The stimulations coming from a person's eyes, ears, and nose travel to the brain as electro-chemical nerve impulses. In biology, physiology, and biochemistry books, you can find many details about how this image forms in the brain. However, you will never come across the most important fact: Who perceives these electro-chemical nerve impulses as images, sounds, odors, and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for an eye, an ear, and a nose. To whom does this consciousness belong? Of course it does not belong to the nerves, the fat layer, and neurons comprising the brain. This is why Darwinist-materialists, who believe that everything is comprised of matter, cannot answer these questions.

For this consciousness is the spirit created by Allah, which needs neither the eye to watch the images nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, it does not need the brain to think.

Everyone who reads this explicit and scientific fact should ponder on Almighty Allah, and fear and seek refuge in Him, for He squeezes the entire universe in a pitch-dark place of a few cubic centimeters in a three-dimensional, colored, shadowy, and luminous form.

A Materialist Faith

The information we have presented so far shows us that the theory of evolution is a incompatible with scientific findings. The theory's claim regarding the origin of life is inconsistent with science, the evolutionary mechanisms it proposes have no evolutionary power, and fossils demonstrate that the required intermediate forms have never existed. So, it certainly follows that the theory of evolution should be pushed aside as an unscientific idea. This is how many ideas, such as the Earth-centered universe model, have been taken out of the agenda of science throughout history.

However, the theory of evolution is kept on the agenda of science. Some people even try to represent criticisms directed against it as an "attack on science." Why?

The reason is that this theory is an indispensable dogmatic belief for some circles. These circles are blindly devoted to materialist philosophy and adopt Darwinism because it is the only materialist explanation that can be put forward to explain the workings of nature.

Interestingly enough, they also confess this fact from time to time. A well-known geneticist and an outspoken evolutionist, Richard C. Lewontin from Harvard University, confesses that he is "first and foremost a materialist and then a scientist":

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.[19]

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to materialism. This dogma maintains that there is no being save matter. Therefore, it argues that inanimate, unconscious matter created life. It insists that millions of different living species (e.g., birds, fish, giraffes, tigers, insects, trees, flowers, whales, and human beings) originated as a result of the interactions between matter such as pouring rain, lightning flashes, and so on, out of inanimate matter. This is a precept contrary both to reason and science. Yet Darwinists continue to defend it just so as "not to allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Anyone who does not look at the origin of living beings with a materialist prejudice will see this evident truth: All living beings are works of a Creator, Who is All-Powerful, All-Wise, and All-Knowing. This Creator is Allah, Who created the whole universe from non-existence, designed it in the most perfect form, and fashioned all living beings.

The Theory of Evolution is the Most Potent Spell in the World

Anyone free of prejudice and the influence of any particular ideology, who uses only his or her reason and logic, will clearly understand that belief in the theory of evolution, which brings to mind the superstitions of societies with no knowledge of science or civilization, is quite impossible.

As explained above, those who believe in the theory of evolution think that a few atoms and molecules thrown into a huge vat could produce thinking, reasoning professors and university students; such scientists as Einstein and Galileo; such artists as Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra and Luciano Pavarotti; as well as antelopes, lemon trees, and carnations. Moreover, as the scientists and professors who believe in this nonsense are

educated people, it is quite justifiable to speak of this theory as "the most potent spell in history." Never before has any other belief or idea so taken away peoples' powers of reason, refused to allow them to think intelligently and logically and hidden the truth from them as if they had been blindfolded. This is an even worse and unbelievable blindness than the Egyptians worshipping the Sun God Ra, totem worship in some parts of Africa, the people of Saba worshipping the Sun, the tribe of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) worshipping idols they had made with their own hands, or the people of the Prophet Musa (peace be upon him) worshipping the Golden Calf.

In fact, Allah has pointed to this lack of reason in the Qur'an. In many verse, He reveals in many verses that some peoples' minds will be closed and that they will be powerless to see the truth. Some of these verses are as follows:

As for those who do not believe, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. Allah has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Surat al-Baqara: 6-7)

… They have hearts with which they do not understand. They have eyes with which they do not see. They have ears with which they do not hear. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Surat al-A'raf: 179)

Even if We opened up to them a door into heaven, and they spent the day ascending through it, they would only say: "Our eyesight is befuddled! Or rather we have been put under a spell!" (Surat al-Hijr: 14-15)

Words cannot express just how astonishing it is that this spell should hold such a wide community in thrall, keep people from the truth, and not be broken for 150 years. It is understandable that one or a few people might believe in impossible scenarios and claims full of stupidity and illogicality. However, "magic" is the only possible explanation for people from all over the world believing that unconscious and lifeless atoms suddenly decided to come together and form a universe that functions with a flawless system of organization, discipline, reason, and consciousness; a planet named Earth with all of its features so perfectly suited to life; and living things full of countless complex systems.

In fact, the Qur'an relates the incident of Prophet Musa and Pharaoh to show that some people who support atheistic philosophies actually influence others by magic. When Pharaoh was told about the true religion, he told Prophet Musa to meet with his own magicians. When Musa did so, he told them to demonstrate their abilities first. The verses continue:

He said: "You throw." And when they threw, they cast a spell on the people's eyes and caused them to feel great fear of them. They produced an extremely powerful magic. (Surat al-A'raf: 116)

As we have seen, Pharaoh's magicians were able to deceive everyone, apart from Musa and those who believed in him. However, his evidence broke the spell, or "swallowed up what they had forged," as the verse puts it.

We revealed to Musa, "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false. (Surat al-A'raf: 117-119)

As we can see, when people realized that a spell had been cast upon them and that what they saw was just an illusion, Pharaoh's magicians lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who, under the influence of a similar spell, believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them, abandon their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, Malcolm Muggeridge, an atheist philosopher and supporter of evolution, admitted he was worried by just that prospect:

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.[20]

That future is not far off: On the contrary, people will soon see that "chance" is not a deity, and will look back on the theory of evolution as the worst deceit and the most terrible spell in the world. That spell is already rapidly beginning to be lifted from the shoulders of people all over the world. Many people who see its true face are wondering with amazement how they could ever have been taken in by it.

They said, "Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."
(Qur'an, 2: 32)

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